The Erotic Sculpture of KHAJURAHO



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Laxminarayan Pachori



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FOREWORD

The study of Indian art-history has made appreciable progress in recent times The earlier art-historians and art-critics were more concerned with the outward nature of various art-forms In the study of Indian architecture, sculpture and the pictorial art, more attention was paid to descriptive details than to the philosophical background of art and its aesthetic norms The multi-disciplinary approach in the art-study was also generally lacking in the previous studies A K Coomaraswamy was the first erudite art-historian to understand the need of these essentials in the study of Indian art His line of approach has successfully been followed by a number of scholars in the recent past

Khajuraho occupies an enviable position in Indian art-history The extant temple-complex there represents a harmonious blending of architecture, sculpture, performing arts and literature For the study of the chief Indian religious cults and the variegated life-patterns of the early medieval period, Khajuraho furnishes a rich source-material

As regards the sculptural art, several distinct categories are noticeable at Khajuraho These are

(i) The cult images of gods and goddesses
(ii) The subsidiary deities, including the *ganas, dikpalas, gandharvas* and *shasanadevatas*
(iii) The *surasundaris, apsaras* or *madanikas* They form a dominant and enchanting group of decorative figures in the temples
(iv) Domestic scenes These throw welcome light on various facets of life of different groups of the society
(v) Animals and Birds The most significant among the animals *is shardula or vyala* In ancient literature it is also mentioned as Ihamriga, having some interesting syncratic forms
(vi) Natural scenes and various symbols They are important for the study of flora and fauna of the region The symbols show geographical and religious significance They are indicative of the fact that symbology in Indian art continued to play an important role even during the early medieval period

The modelling of the human figures at Khajuraho, particularly of the surasundaris, is exquisitely sensitive The 'erotic' factor in the Khajuraho art can be attributed to the then growing influence of the Kaula sect of the Shaktism. According to the Shastric injunctions,

it had a deeper spiritual significance, laying stress on duality in human creation From Khajuraho the Kaula cult spread in several other parts of Madhya Pradesh and further in Orissa The art at Bhubaneshwar, Puri and Konarak amply bears out this fact

Khajuraho very well represents a happy blending of *bhoga* (pleasure) and *yoga* (meditation) Like a comprehensive epic work, it contains the mundane life of different categories of people At the same time, it has a message of divine pleasure and knowledge The worldly happiness and spiritual tranquillity are discernible side by side in this great art

In an interesting stone inscription from Khajuraho, Lord Shiva the representative deity of Khajuraho has been compared with an expert gardener Just as the gardener clears out the shabby weeds from his garden, Shiva, likewise, does away with the evil thoughts and deeds of his followers

The present work is a welcome addition to the studies on Khajuraho The author, Dr L N Pachori, has utilized the literary source-material and has substantiated the point in regard to the preponderance of the sensuous element in certain regions of early medieval India, including Khajuraho While discussing various theories pertaining to the so-called 'art-erotica' Dr Pachori has put forth his own views based on the Indian socio-religious milieu and the relevant psychological factors I am certain that the book will receive due admiration in the scholarly world

SAGAR
15th May, 1988

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PREFACE

Indian art in the past has remained fully dedicated to the service of religion The religions like Brahmanism, Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Shaktism have powerful mythologies, fantacies and imageries which gave ample opportunity to art to convey the doctrines that led man to the goal of liberation The life of Indian people always has been controlled and influenced by morals, and rules generally based on religious theories and thus religion dominated both the individual and the society Religion, indeed, is the source of peace and order, and the strength of society was based on its strength The community of priests enjoyed unquestionable prominence and power

The architecture and sculpture of India are of exceedingly high quality and are documents of refined taste, thoughts and culture of the people They reveal in symbols the most elaborate efforts of man to create faith in god They record in them the various trends, traditions and faiths

The Gupta period in the history of India is the period of Renaissance Stability in the social and religious spheres and great harmony of mind and soul is reflected in the art and literature of the period But thereafter the moral standards of the people surprisingly began to deteriorate and we find that the society was raked and confused by the rivalries among various religions and sects It has been seen that the achievement of power, honour and affluence , of peace, stability and glory has always given birth to certain vices like negligence to duty, inclination towards pleasures and disrespect towards virtue

In the period that followed the disintegration of the Gupta empire, new social and religious ideals and doctrines of the opportunists attracted and misguided people The society lost its control and the individual separatists played a great role in the disintegration of the moral forces that were the backbone of the society As a result the people became idle by nature, fallen by spirit, squandered by individualism, and scattered by loose social and religious doctrines All the fine arts and literature of the time bear marks of this degeneration and the life of man was very much infested by sexual pleasures and merry-making

Since art is the autobiography of culture we locate in it not only the aspirations and achievements but also failures of the people When the social structure is enshrouded with the rigidness of ancient laws art has shown man the right path and it has taken over the responsibility of control and guidance Art portrays the imaginations of man

and these imaginations are the representative emotions of the people of a particular period

In the art of the post-Gupta period we find sensuousness in expression and forms in an increasing order Both art and literature of the time show erotic elements to an extremity as in the depiction of sex-play and sexual act This trend may well be due to the deterioration in morality and puritan approach to sex—it may be either due to the increased freedom in sex-activity—or due to the perverted attitude towards sex or both We find that all religions embraced the sex-orgies in one form or other and there was great confusion regarding the various forms of worship being adopted by them Sex according to them was one of the important means to achieve spiritual bliss which ultimately resulted in the achievement of liberation

Good many theories have been put forward for the representation of the erotic in art and literature It has been very much common with the ancient social and religious institutions to impose 'taboos and inhibitions' on man's erotic expressions, on his sexual drives and on his lust The expression of sexual desire and habit was considered to be against social norms In India, though the sex-act had been a sacred rite, the sexual drives were improper if publicly expressed

In the history of European countries we find that before the foundation of Christian religion there was enough freedom in the sexual life of the people But since the formation of the Church many 'systems of control' were imposed to restrain frank sexuality of the early period

Sexual regulations imposed by religions over the masses as well as over the community of the priests always created problems The stronger section of the community defied the regulations and adopted various means to satisfy its sexual drives, the weaker section followed the former in their own way In India these regulations on sex created separatists who adopted Tantric way of life that advocated the theory of *Yoga* and *Bhoga* Though the religious orgies of Tantricism were difficult the religion attracted a large number of people But they adopted a simplified course to fulfil their sexual designs Brahmanism, Jainism and Buddhism, finding it difficult to restrain their followers from adopting Tantric way of worship, accorded their divinities the right to own a female each as their wives, power or shakti Furthermore, the theory of the union of *Purusha* with *Prakriti* or the god with *Maya* (illusion) helped to relieve, to some extent, the tension caused by sexual regulations But Buddhism and Jainism had to pay a great price for this shifting in ideals so much so that they lost their popularity

The other reason which worsened their position was the admission of women as nuns or *bhikshunis*

There were five major sects of the Tantrics—*Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava Saura* and *Ganapatya* Later one more sect came into being which simplified the rituals of the former and thus came to be known as the *Sahaja* (simple) cult The form of worship practised by the followers of the *Sahaja* cult was later adopted by the Buddhists and Jains The *Mahayana* cult of Buddhism was further divided and the new sect was known as *Vajrayana* This gave Buddhism a further lease of life but finally it had to merge with various Tantric sects Later on all the Tantric sects assimilated in the *Sahaja* and *Natha* cults which advocated the control of the necessities of the material world and opposed the theory of achieving the goal of life through artificial and unnatural means

Tantricism had enough popularity in the Gupta period In Tantricism the worship of *Shakti* proclaimed that god could not be conceived without *Shakti*

By the time the Chandellas came to power Tantricism was a spent force whereas Vaishnavism and Shaivism were regaining vitality The *bhikshus* and *bhikshunis* were seen with great contempt, and the Tantric thoughts had no scope of popularity due to its religious orgies

While in the religious arena there was much conflict, rivalry and jealousy which created confusion and chaos in the minds of the people, brisk attempts were being made by the art centres to supplement the weakening forces of the principal religions As a result we are left with an enormous wealth of art, greater skill and refinement in the plastic as well as architectural arts that has survived the ravages of time and iconoclasts Throughout the period, beginning from Asoka to the end of 13th century A D , we find that the art activities went on incessantly the study of which shows that where the religious doctrines failed art succeeded and the life of man could sustain the shocks of religious uncertainty

In the Gupta period a great revolution is noticed in the spheres of art, literature and religion It was a period of social and political stability, therefore, it was natural that cultural activities were at the fore The artists produced superb images of Buddha, Tirthankaras and gods of the Hindu Pantheon Great literary works and treatises on architecture and sculpture were written These works later became the textbooks for art of the subsequent periods

In the works of art of this period there is skill, finesse and charm It was a divine art but the artist seems to enjoy no freedom for trans-

cribing the blooming beauty of his spirit into enchanting human forms, seems to crave for portraying lively human figures donned with variety of expressions and exhibiting charming movements

In the art of post-Gupta period the artist appears more wise and brilliant in representing the emotions of man He seems quite conversant with emotions of love, lucidity of life and placidity of beauty—the figures appear lively and express much

The knowledge and imagination of the artist of the Gupta period gave immense help to the artist of later period

The sensuousness that appeared in the figures so conspicuously has not been absent so far It has remained ever since man tried his hand in sculptural art We may consider the Yaksha figure of pre-Mauryan times to be the first human figure carved in stone The Yaksha and Yakshis of Bharhut show increased tenderness and flesh in them The sensuous charm goes on increasing in the Yaksha and Yakshis of Shunga—Kanva and Shaka-Kushana periods respectively In the latter period at Amaravati the panorama of human life depicted in many panels is worth noticing The flexibility of the body, blooming youthfulness and the expressions convey the excitement, joy and devotion in the figures. The sensuousness is so great and intoxicating that one feels the invitation to touch This sensuousness is certainly the prerogative of the erotic figures of the succeeding Hindu period These have the characteristics of physical charm and beauty that gradually developed into the most vibrant erotic impulse possessed by the sculptures of Khajuraho, Konarak, Modhera and so on The use of drapery may clearly indicate to the fact that the superfluous robes donned by the early Buddha figures of Mathura and Gandhara which concealed much of the body were not helpful in giving the delicate appearance that was later achieved in the Buddha figures of Sarnath The physical charm of the figures was accentuated by wet or transparent effect of the drapery that is sufficient to cover the nudity Throughout the Gupta period this style was in great use.

In the sculptures of Khajuraho we witness emotional drive, physical charm and lovely posture of the male and female figures In them there is a beautiful combination of love and submission, of desire and passion, and of movement and form This exhibition of worldly charm and emotion forces the viewer to doubt whether the artist had lost his vision of the ideals—but to his surprise he finds superb images of gods which carry the same serious and divine expressions as those carved in the early periods The sincerity and ideals of the artist cannot be doubted simply because they had created mundane figures

expressing love, passion and desire in truthful manner It may be said, however, that he has often crossed the limits of decency at some places in an attempt to depict the emotion of love in an unhesitating and faithful manner The height of passion, the intimate embrace and the sex-act depicted here have certain ideal to convey, certain message to deliver and certain object to achieve

The question is how far in art the representation of the erotic is justified Art is a successful medium to express man's faith, ideal and truth of life It carries the message of one period to another, it embodies the language, expression and history of mankind—of civilisation, it transmits the innermost feeling of one man—one period—one civilisation to the other, it conveys truth, preserves perishable ideas, records forgettable deeds It is thus a great medium of transplanting truths, ideas and ideals in man

Due to an inseparable deep relationship between man and society the entire world of art remains vested with social norms The true art is the result of a kind of mutual understanding and an agreement between man, i e , artist, and society All the views, feelings and emotions of man have to seek social approval before being expressed Man cannot be given freedom of expressing what is harmful to society The restraints of society control the nature of expression and thus are the essentials of orderly life of man The limits and ideals of the society are the essential guidelines for man's actions

Besides social control there are other institutions like religion, State, and family that impose restraints on man Furthermore, the political and economic conditions also influence him Every time a change occurs in the ideals and in these institutions, the life of man is effected accordingly It is, however, true that there exists constant conflict between the individual and society in which the former has to bow down before the strength of the latter In exceptional cases and individual cows down the society so much so that the latter is obliged to change its ideals and attitudes

The way in which sexual love has been portrayed in the sculpture of Khajuraho shows that either the attitude towards sex was considerately liberal or there was enough moral deterioration in general The depiction of this most intimate and private act in the place of worship in such a period when the temples were the centres of power surprises us It may clearly indicate to the taking of undue advantage by the temple authorities—priests and the donors—to satisfy their whims It may also point to the system in which it was customary for the newly-wed woman to offer her virginity to god—and it used to

be the priest who acted as a representative of god and accepted the offering

Whatever the case may be, we find that in this period, throughout the length and width of the country, there was an erotic trend in the fields of art and literature The outstanding literary works of about 700 years starting from 2 century A D give ample proof of the trend of erotic writing Some of the works are listed below

1	*Saundaranand* of Ashvaghosh	2 Cent A D
2	*Gatha Sapta-shati* of Hala	3 Cent A D
3	*Meghduta, Ritu-Samhara,* etc , of Kalidasa	3–4 Cent A D
4	*Naishadha charita, Ratnavali Priyadarshika,* etc , of Shri Harsha	7 Cent A D
5	*Amaru Shataka* of Amaru	"
6	*Vasavadatta* of Subandhu	"
7	*Shataka Trayam* of Bhartrihari	"
8	*Dashakumaracharita* of Dandin	"

We must study thoroughly the socio-religious conditions of the time and must not simply disregard all this wealth as pornography and obscene The modern view of sex cannot help us to judge the merits of this trend Hence a comprehensive study of the human behaviour and attitude and the possible state of the social and religious institutions of the time is necessary

I have made a meagre contribution, full of limitations, and have tried to critically examine various opinions of scholars and writers I shall be rewarded if my work would help to throw a new light upon the most critical aspect of Indian sculpture

Calcutta
The 8th January, 1989

Laxminarayan Pachori

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In the beginning of this monograph I feel it my duty to pay my debt of gratitude to persons without whose help this work would not have seen the light of the day

I publish this woik without a few words of blessings from my supervisor Late Dr Rajbali Pandey because of his death before submission of the thesis May this humble work be his living memory

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Calcutta
The 8th January, 1989 Laxminarayan Pachori

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System of Transliteration

An attempt is made to present phonetical pronunciation omitting the diacritical marks , thus Sh is used for Ś and S

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Indian Sculpture

General Survey

The Indian plastic art with its manifold traditions spread over a period of several centuries It is mainly dedicated to the religious theme, though different subjects have been profusely attempted Portrait sculpture has mainly been attempted by the South Indian sculptures on being commissioned by the rulers of the different dynasties

The important religions that have enriched the cultural heritage of Indian art are the Brahmanism, Shaivism, Buddhism and Jainism, exquisite myths and legends of which made a contribution to beautiful works of art Besides these, the contribution of various cults and sects viz, Shaktism, Tantricism, Vaishnavism, etc, is also significant Practice and adherence to different theories and philosophies changed the outlook and perspective of the individual and, hence, of the artist, writer, poet and of other intellectuals. The religious impact



was so deep on literature and art that the individual as well as social life moulded, from time to time, in the pattern of popular religion The religion, hence, was the dominating force Temples were the centres of all activities whatsoever As the priests dominated the society they mobilized and commissioned the construction of imposing and towering temples signifying the overall supremacy of religion

A large number of temples were built all over the country in the so-called last phase of Indian art These not only bear marks of considerable refinement in architectural and sculptural quality but of the contemporary upsurge of the revolutionary spirit—of the breaking away from the stagnant way of life and of the evolution of totally new dogmas also This was a time when the society was pausing after the ravages of conflicts and wars , conditions of peace, prosperity, leisure and wit prevailed The rigid old dogmas and strict codes of social and religious conduct were being given new and simple appearance , and there was an overwhelming response from the masses A great creative activity is witnessed in literature and art of this time, never before the country was linked together by principles and philosophies and traditions—identical and common, as now, which is evident in the treatises available on various subjects and temples and sculptures scattered far and wide in the country

The art of this period revolutionised the mind and spirit of the people on one hand, though on the other created perversion, frustration, illusion and chaos On achieving power, glory and prosperity , peace, stability and leisure people took to enjoyment and pleasure New moral codes and social values were found to suit their new way of life, and the standards and principles which had helped them to achieve the height of glory were brushed aside Whatever man wrote, painted, carved and sought for himself tended towards perversion and represented such impulses as were dominated by sex

Art reflects the social and personal approaches of people and necessarily depicts universal truths and transcendental values of life When a sensation is aroused in man by some artwork, a particular emotion is infused in him—the purpose of art is fulfilled In this respect the art of this period adequately and effectively influences the human emotions and, hence, the erotic representations may be tolerated

For proper understanding of art a sharp emotional response is a prerequisite Sympathetic approach and receptibility of the viewer create an affinity between man and an artwork An artist is stirred by certain ideas and vision, and in giving shape to a vision he expresses

his own inner-self It is this vision of the artist which is to be realised by the viewer

Indian art, as Indian philosophy, shows the way to salvation, it provides a resting place for the soul It helps man to realise the existence of God and strive for the propinquity of his creator It does not debase man

The subject of erotic representation in art, if considered in the light of the purpose of art, must have an ideal and, therefore, it would be quite a responsible task to justify or denounce its place in the heritage of religion and art of the country The aesthetic, moral and social values of the subject need a careful evaluation with the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho as the background

Indian Sculptor

The art of sculpture in India has its origin in the need of man to visualize his god, his mentor, his protector so that his thoughts may converge to the object of his devotion In the identification of the soul of man with the soul of nature a kind of inspiration from god was sought and, therefore, symbols and images were made The evolution of the Buddha image marks the beginning proper of the making of images of gods The artist gave transcendental expression, above all earthly sentiments and longings, to the Buddha in his divine aspect such expression was found suitable for the images of gods Later image of god was conceived according to the thought forms of a divinity first in symbols later in human forms

For imbibing superhuman characters in the images purity of thought, clarity of vision and traditional skill of the artist were desirable and, therefore, image making was considered a part of devotional rite The chapter 58, "*Vanasampraveshadhyaya of Brihatsamhita*" lays down details regarding the ceremony of securing wood from the forest trees and bringing home for the purpose of making images of gods and goddesses The *Bhavishya Purana*, *Vishnudharmottara*, *Matsya Purana* and *Mansara* give details similar to *Brihatsamhita*

Brihatsamhita mentions the way in which the artist will propitiate the tree with various offerings and worship the gods, manes, Rakshasas, Nagas, Asuras, Ganas, and Vinayakas at night uttering mantra

Thus from collecting of the material to the consecration of the image the artist used to perform different rites and lived under strict discipline which became a way of his life

We find rituals and prayers offered by the artist to the various spirits which lived in the material and its vicinity to be used for making images [1]

Thus the Indian artist was a *sadhaka* by tradition and temperament, spiritually on a much higher plane than a commoner With a most sensitive, emotional and intellectual approach towards his art he performed the rituals of collecting wood, selecting stone or carving an image on any one of these materials His devotedness to his work was more or less like a devotional worship of a god The most sensitive modelling of the limbs and the other worldly expressions in the physiognomy of the deity could only be achieved by tradition and practice and with the artist's enlightened mind, faith in religion and sincere approach to the theme of his work

The realization of the presence of the Divine Being in everything and of everything in the Divine Being was the prerequisite of the conception of a visual form of the Supreme Being "He is manifest in Himself and is manifest in this world as the world came into being from Him That Manifest (God) of the manifest (world) when realized by the worshipper the only Manifest God remains "[2] This all pervading invisible God is within all the forms and space "Worship and contemplation of the God is possible for the human being only when He is endowed with form because Images are meant to meet the need of the unrealized"[3] and also "because the unrealized have not the capacity of worshipping divinity in its true form they should accept the help of images This is why images are necessary."[4]

The visual form, symbol or image of the infinite, checks the flight of the mind The emotion which rises in the mind in the presence of such a form is true religion[5] and spiritually elevates man and leads on good path and finally to salvation Religion dwells in the inner-self of man, and art is the product of this inner-self Art is expressed in symbols, as such the symbols represent the realization and feelings of man They are the visible expressions of the invisible matters They are the sentiments given shape and form—the sentiments are based on knowledge—and knowledge is gained through mental impressions or the effects of Karma , and the Hindus believe the births, in the life-cycle, to be according to the Karmas The Karmas are the result of the conducts of man, and the conduct is the essence of religion Whatever is done if it can be said as proper or good, is Dharma and if not, it is not Dharma—this is judged by the conscience of man [6] Those who would realize this Dharma—the religion—would visualize symbols and images

The artist was required to purify himself from within and without so as to transcend emotions and visualize the form of a divinity with adequate support Dhyana-mantras Because "Verily, The body

of the deity arises from its basic thought form" (or seed-mantra)[7] that, "The mantra represents a definite whom it praise pleases, 'That of which it speaks is the deity'"[8]

When the artist feels that the divinity and himself are but the one, he is able to give definite form to that divinity This identification of himself with the divinity enables to forget his worldly existence and thus he gets mentally and spiritually transcended to become one with the divinity

The sculptor, thus having fully prepared himself set to work on stone, metal, clay or wood with a clear vision of the object, traditionally equipped and well-informed of the canonical descriptions of the god or deity He worked with perfect ease and devoted zeal and, therefore, was able to transmit his understanding and emotions on to the image The adherence to the prescribed canons was a prerequisite as conventional and canonical images were considered auspicious "If the image is well made the subjects become full of happiness"[9] and that "The deficiency in the length and breadth (of an image causes famine and revolution"[10] and so on

An artist has more sensitiveness, emotion and urge to express himself from a normal man, and he cultivates in himself deep insight, understanding and skill to translate his thoughts and emotions into visual objects of art The purity of his feelings, sincerity to his work and experience in his trade only can produce such works that express universal ideals

The gradual development and refinement in the plastic art and the evolution of various philosophical concepts influenced and led the artist to create works propounding the dogmas and beliefs of the contemporary religions When a particular religion swept the minds of the people it was for the artist to supplement the needs of their worship and, hence, he created impressive images

The sculptors of Khajuraho have carved superb sculptures which form a part of the architecture yet are singularly significant Each one of them is a composition in itself— expressive of a particular emotion All the figures have a purpose, an ideal to convey There appears an engagement of the devotees in a mass worship, a transcendental purpose being sought by the humans of this world The sincere love towards life in all of them is suggestive of their sincerity towards their mission There are two aspects of life—desire and abandonment in constant struggle for suppremacy over each other, yet there is an effort of the stronger aspect to support the weaker aspect The male helping his love-mate to let her realize the futility

of the worldly passions and the desires—to let her know and to advance towards that supreme goal in the same spirit as is manifest in the worldly union of male and female which represents the union of Purusha and Prakriti—of Being and Becoming An extremely human approach to a divine ideal—a human ecstacy in a process of transformation to a divine sublimity is ably conveyed in abounding mass of lovely figures The plastic art reaches a new height at the hands of the sculptors who have successfully conveyed the ideals and philosophy conceived by the reformists and the philanthropists of the age

The sculpture on the temple shrines of Khajuraho is conceived as a part of architecture and nowhere it acquires prominent position, despite its unusual theme, except when a curious viewer is only interested in it

The sculptor who has almost written on stone a saga of human emotion, and created a fantasy depicting a ceaseless trial of the worldly soul and a spirited quest for eternal peace and salvation "When gods are left behind and mortals appear art becomes simpler, freer, gain in spontaneity what it loses in hieratic calm "[11]

The female forms possess an exclusively beautiful grace, delicacy and charm which are befittingly poetic, remarkably expressive and canonically symbolic

Influence of Different Thoughts on the Art of Sculpture

The art of a period or a country reflects the individual, social and religious approach of the people Indian art, like all Indian religions, strives and aims at the realisation by the human soul of the Supreme Soul, to know the purpose of man's life it helps man to know the Truth and it brings the mortal and eternal principles together for man to attain the life's goal—the salvation

The subject matter of the Indian plastic art has mainly been religious The evolution of image has its root in the attempt of holding the attention of the worshipper on his god The Vedic and Puranic gods as conceived by the sages had imaginery forms, their existence and power vested in a Supreme Entity which was the primal cause of creation The descriptions of these gods in Dhyana-mantras are so realistic that it is often believed that images of these deities must have existed But proofs of image making, in remote Vedic period have not so far been found

The great Vedic age and the glorious age of the Epics have given us numerous Dhyana-mantras—the thought-forms related to various deities These contain vivid descriptions of deities and gods Conception

of a deity based on these Dhyana-mantras is the abstract symbolism in words An image provides a practical support to man in his ordeal against the evils of life, it is an object of meditation and self-realisation and it acts as a guide in man's quest of Truth and Salvation

The human body is the seat of all desires and passions, it is the medium of all actions and experiences in the pursuit of knowledge and realisation The body is, therefore, an object of Right Knowledge (Prameya), Knowledge of the Ultimate Reality which manifests in it In art, therefore, the conception of a divinity in human form is an ideal symbolism Man has been said to be similar to the god

In Indian art there is an attempt to realise the Ultimate Reality—the Truth—the Absolute which is beyond descriptions It brings the man nearer to his god

The art of sculpture served as the pole-bearer of the Buddhist faith The *Jataka* stories, which have in them true anthropomorphic spirit, illustrate the human sentiments, triumphs, failings, lust, devotion, love, etc , in close natural background of vegetal and animal association It is only when the Buddhist art developed and image of Buddha was conceived that the artist found expression of a divine ideal in human figure The artist's skill centred around only one figure and he symbolised the human emotions to expressions of one who had realised the Truth and transcended to divinity The physiognomy of the Buddha figure was so conceived as to depict love, sympathy and pity for the suffering humanity, so as to reflect vision and knowledge of the compassionate soul housed in a perfect—well-built body form

The culmination of the art of sculpture is evidenced in the Gupta period when numerous icons of gods were made The Brahmanism reappeared with great force

Great many temples were erected all over the country The history of the development of temple architecture too is interestingly romantic and fantastic Beginning from simple house-like enclosure culminating to magnificent towering edifices the tale of the temple architecture is a fusion of a great many traditions and styles, and spiritual, philosophical and mythical development

Brahmanical temples and images along with Buddhist monasteries, and images, and Jaina temples and images were built in considerable number in conformity to the canonical strictures

The Brahmanical art was all an affair of the divinities, semi-gods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Apsaras incorporated in cosmic composition with great imaginative skill, a panoramic depiction of myths and legends of a great religion However, the anthropomorphic

aspect of life never occurred in this art The artist never was at liberty to portray purely human sentiments and thus his art concerned with the depiction of the supramundane (Divyakriya) activity of gods and goddesses.

With the close of the Gupta era wide political disintegration in the country broke the empire into small states and the local rulers declared their independence Many religious sects manoeuvered their hold over the people in different regions of the country Buddhism and Brahmanism, subject to the loss of royal patronage of the powerful Guptas, lost vigour and popularity The powerful sects of Brahmanism, viz, Vaishnavism, Shaivism and Shaktism, have their roots in the Tantric worship of Vishnu, Shiva and Shakti

With the popularity of the Tantric ideals which believed in the Unity in Duality ushered in the era of representation of the male and female aspects of the deities in most sensuous modelling and expressions Tantra worship is nothing but Shakti worship and Shakti is the desire of Shiva to create the world [12] In Hindu religion no god is imagined without Shakti—his female principle In Buddhist Tantricism Tāra is the main Shakti The Tantras attribute the creation of the world to the union of Shiva and Shakti Sun symbolises Shiva and Moon represents Shakti,[13] thus Moon symbolises the creation, Agni is destruction, and all these are the different aspects of Parameshvara [14] Shiva is not without Shakti and Shakti is not without Shiva [15]



This Tantric metaphysical synthesis provided the Indian artist with the concept of the duality of sex and an opportunity to exhibit his skill with great ingenuity and sensitiveness, the anthropomorphic aspect, emotions, charm and love

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2 ॐ पूर्णमद पूर्णमिद पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

Brıhadaranyaka Upanıshad 5 1

3 अज्ञाना भावनार्थाय प्रतिमा परिकल्पिता ॥

Jabala-darshana Upanıshad 4 59

4 अज्ञाना साक्षाद्भगवत्पूजाया कर्त्तुमशक्यत्वेन प्रतिमायामेव कर्त्तव्यत्वात्तदर्थं प्रतिमा निर्मातव्या ।

Caları, Commentary on Tantra-sara Sangraha of Madhvacharya

5 यतोभ्युदयनि श्रेयससिद्धि स धर्म ।

Vaısheshık Sutra

6 कर्मणश्च विवेकार्थं धर्म्माधर्मौव्यवेचयेत ।

Apastambha Dharmasutra 1-26

7 देवताया शरीर तु बीजादुत्पद्यते ध्रुवम् ।

Yamala Tantra

8 तेनोच्यते स देवता ।

Sarvanukramanı

9 सुक्ता सा भवेदर्चा जायते ससुखा प्रजा ।

Pratımamanalakshanam, 74-1

10 दुर्भिक्षो राष्ट्रभग स्याद्धीना विस्तारदीर्घयो ।

Ibıd, 78 1

11 Max-Pol Fouchet , "The Erotıc Sculpture of Indıa" , PP 11-12

12 'शक्ति परमशिवस्य जगत्सिसृक्षा ।'

Parashurama Kalpasutra

13 'शशाकशकलाकारा अम्बिकाचार्घ चन्द्रिका ।
एकेवेत्थ परा शक्तिस्त्रिधा सा तु प्रजायते ॥'

Tantraloka Vol II 3 67 p 77

14 'चन्द्र सृष्टि विजानीयादग्नि सहार उच्यते ।
अवतारो रवि प्रोक्तो मध्यस्थ' परमेश्वर ॥'

Ibıd, p 79

15 'न शिव शक्तिरहितो न शक्ति शिववर्जिता ॥'

Ibıd, p 80

2

The Chandellas

Great Temple Builders

Khajuraho temples have a unique place in the vast realm of temple architecture and plastic art of the country These, which have survived the ravages of the invaders and the weather, still have enormous wealth of art left They not only signify the artistic approach of the artists but create new standards of aesthetics all the while maintaining the tradition of the glorious Guptas



The Chandellas were great temple builders Their contribution has been classed equally great as those of the great builders of the past-Ashoka and the Pallavas or the Rashtrakuta

At Khajuraho the group of temples as expositions of different sectarian beliefs, signify religious tolerance of the rulers and importance of the place for its having a central position in the country with a safe enclosure of mountain ranges all round

It is still debatable whether the Chan-

della rulers commissioned the temples to be constructed under their direct control or they simply patronized the construction which actually was undertaken by the temple priests and the rulers only played the part of the patrons and did not in any way interfere with the trend of art

There are, however, certain inscriptions which mention the land-grants and gifts made to the temples and the priests

"The surplus wealth of the feudatories and the king was not invested in craft production or trade, but was used for conspicuous consumption The palatial homes of the feudatories were richly ornamented, and much of the income was spent in building magnificent temples, richly endowed, "[1]

Inscriptions mention that these temples were built during A D 950 to A D 1050, this conjoins with the period of Dhanga and Vidyadhara, when the Chandellas were at the height of their glory

The power of the Chandellas was undoubtedly supreme, and construction of the temple complex on such a large-scale could not have taken shape without their active support

We find the art of temple architecture and sculpture reaching a new height after that of Gupta period There is a marked improvement, maturity and innovation in style and craftsmanship

The great artistic activity of the period is an indication of the political and social stability during the Chandella rule The power of the Chandellas and their religious tolerance seem to have established spiritual unity in the followers of different faiths and thus a great cultural development is noticed in the mortal remains of Khajuraho—the religious capital of the Chandellas

By the time Chandella Yashovarman succeeded as a ruler of Chandella kingdom the stage was already set for him to work for independent Chandella power, greatly by his own military successes over a number of powerful dynasties like the Pratihara and the Kalachuri, the Palas of Bengal, the Khasas, the Kosalas, the Kashmiras, the Mithilas, the Malavas and the Kurus and partly by the statesmanship of his father Harshadeva in the early 10th century A D

Yashovarman is described to have erected a magnificient temple dedicated to Vishnu His successor Dhanga followed the ambitious tradition of his father by successful military operations and making the Turkish expedition led by Sultan Mahmud simply a futile campaign Although he averted the possibility of coming into direct conflict with him Dhanga completed the construction of the temple begun by his father

The reign of Gandadeva, Dhanga's son, who ruled for a very

short term, was not eventful, but during the reign of his son Vidyadhara a glorious chapter was written when he successfully tried to unite a number of powers in Northern India twice to fight against the mighty and ambitious invasion of Mahmud, in A D 1019 and 1022 He also earned a great name in subduing and killing Rajyapal, the ruler of Kanauj

The period after Vidyadhara, i e , during the reign of his son and successor Vijayapal, the Chandella supremacy was challanged by the rising powers of the Kalachuris and the Paramaras Later a great damage to the Chandella supremacy was caused by the Kalachuri king Lakshmikarna when he defeated Devavarman, son of Vijayapal But the Chandella glory was restored by convincing victory of Kirtivarman, son of Devavarman, over Kalachuris in the last quarter of the 11th century A D

In the subsequent period, i e , after Kirtivarman till the accession of Madanvarman the contribution of the Chandella rulers is insignificant Madanvarman greatly revived the prestige, power and status of the dynasty • Paramardideva, grandson of Madanvarman, however, earned a name as an illustrious Chandella ruler by his strong administration in early periods of his reign when he recovered a good portion of the lost territories and by his conflicts with the Chahmanas He was defeated at the hands of Prithviraj and was taken prisoner Soon after the recovery from this blow his territory came to be invaded by Altamus who defeated him in battle and forced him to surrender and make a promise of allegiance, but he died a natural death before he could execute any of the conditions With this ended the long reign of Paramardi, the last great ruler of the Chandella dynasty, under whom the Chandella power once again rose to its height

Chandella power was again given a fresh lease of life by Trailokyavarman He annexed a large portion of the Kalachuri Kingdom His successor Viravarman could rule peacefully for sometime but during the reign of the last ruler Hammirvarman the Chandella kingdom was captured by Alauddin It is, however, possible that the Chandella power was limited to some small areas

Religious Background

In the post-Vedic age Brahmanism had grown into a most systematic and ritualistic religion, but soon various reformist sects like Jainism and Buddhism forced Brahmanical religion to become liberal During the reign of Chandragupta Maurya Brahmanism was most tolerant to these religions and could maintain its hold due to liberal

views Then Ashoka pioneered the missionary work for spreading Buddhism in India as well as to other neighbouring countries Though he accorded full recognition and gave equal respect to other religions, on one hand the impact of Brahmanism, was reduced

In the second and first century B C the Greek-Bactrians had made their way in the north-western parts of the country and might have pressed still inward but for the strong opposition of the staunch Brahman king Pushyamitra Shunga who had established his reign in Magadha He struggled equally against the powers of Buddhism and Greeks, and as a result Brahmanism regained its dynamism Now Brahmanism had split up in two main religions, viz , one in which Rudra was worshipped the other in which Krishna Vasudeva These considerably influenced Buddhism The Vedic rituals were revived and developed into *bhakti* or devotion, the Brahmanas regained their position The three religions of the time known as Rudra-Bhagavatism, Krishna-Vasudeva-Bhagavatism and Buddha-Bhagavatism rejected the asceticism and renunciation The Greeks, the Romans and the Shakas and the Pahlavas, who had settled in the country after their defeat, embraced Rudra-Shiva-Bhagavatism and Krishna-Vasudeva-Bhagavatism Shiva was, however, popular in the country and was also worshipped, along with other gods by the Shungas

In the later period Mahavira and Buddha also became popular among the Shakas In the Kushana period the incarnations of Vishnu and Buddha became popular and Buddhism spread to other countries in the north and north-west of India Buddhism had now split up in the Hinayana and the Mahayana In the Hinayana, Buddha was considered as a historic figure whereas in the Mahayana, he was elevated to godly status in which he took several births

In the Gupta period, Buddhism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism received equal attention from the Gupta kings There were five main religious sects within the Brahmanical fold, viz , the Bhagavatas, the Pashupatas, the Maheshvaras, the Sauryas and the Shaktas Worship of numerous gods and goddesses had begun The religious tolerance of the Guptas and the Brahmanism offered great challenge to Buddhism which was by now getting corrupt by the accumulation of wealth and admission of women to the Sangha The greatest set back to Buddhism was the acceptance, by the Brahmanism, of the Buddha as one of the incarnations of Vishnu These factors led to free assimilation of the doctrines and beliefs of the two religions The Vedanta philosophy of non-dualism gave a deadly blow to Buddhism by

preaching views identical to Buddhism

In the post-Gupta period (7th to 9th Cent A D), both Buddhism and Brahmanism were greatly influenced by the Puranic and Tantric philosophy which, however, led to doctrinal unity but emphatically gave predominance to particular god-heads The Tantricism interpreted the orthodox and puritanic views of the principal religion to suit its heretic degressional and extremist forms of worship Although Tantricism was made attractive with the allowance of enjoyment of sex, drinking wine, etc , yet it was never allowed to come out of its home in the forest to pollute the civilians

Brahmanism in the Gupta period had developed the conception of the Tantric worship in which the gods had their consorts as their Shakti The march of Tantricism into the post-Gupta period is evidenced in two separate thoughts the Dakshinamargi, viz , the Tantricism and the Vamamargi There were five principal Tantric sects Shaiva, Shakta, Vaishnava, Saura and Ganapatya The Mahayana Buddhism assimilated in it, the Tantric philosophy of Shakti worship, and its followers were initiated to the mystic and esoteric Vajrayana This process enabled Buddhism to stay on in India for some more time The Sahajayana mysticism which brought in the easy and attractive form of worship advocated the mastery over the physical needs, urges and attachments of man on one hand and discouraged artificial and unnatural process for achieving the life's goal Vajrayana allows man to act and live as a worldly man but to dedicate himself, his love and affections to his Master, to his God, so that he may experience the divine love, while Sahajayana allows the enjoyment of worldly pleasures and acquiring progeny (Artha and Kama) and then seek *moksha* (through the Dharma)

Tantricism was widely prevalent in India and the Vajra, the Sahaja and the Natha mysticism followed its foot-steps, later all of them fused together and triumphed over Tantricism

In course of time some sections of the followers of Tantricism misinterpreted the Tantric philosophy and practised the sex-predominant sacrifices and evolved various theories to justify their way of worship, but this form of Vamamarga worship could not make much impact on the intellectuals and the righteous The followers of Vamamarga were driven out to dwell in the forests The esoteric rites were practised by these persons along with the aboriginals, viz , Kolas, Kiratas and Bhils *Dashakumaracharita* describes that, "In the Vindhya forest brahmanas who have left the studies of the *Vedas* and such practices as are suited to Brahmanas and the path of

truth live with the tribal people like Pulindas and Kiratas and practise sinful and abominable acts They eat the grains given to them by these dwellers of the forest" [2]

The extremist Tantricism in the post-Gupta period was a synthesis of the various Tantra principles of Brahmanism which conceived the gods along with their female consorts as their Shakti Without this Shakti the god could not be conceived The creative power of Lord Shiva is known as Shakti and as Shiva is not without Shakti the Shakti is not without Shiva From this Shakti, which is also known as the Matrika Shakti, all matters spring-forth to life—come into being [3] This Shakti came to be worshipped as the genetrix of the universe The conception of the Purusha and Prakriti as Shiva and Shakti respectively and from their union the creation of the Universe formed the basis of Tantricism

Shiva happens to be one of the members of the Trinity since the age of the *Upanishads* In Shaivism, Shiva is considered as the supreme being, the source and essence of the universe

During the period conjoining the reign of the Chandellas there may have existed considerable synthesis between Vaishnavism and Shaivism A devotee of Shiva was necessarily a devotee of the two other gods of the Trinity The Shaivas, though developed single-minded devotion to Shiva, had enough respect for other gods During the ninth to tenth century numerous religious sects, however, aiming at the common goal of salvation, had their own peculiar ways, unintelligible thought-forms (mantras) rituals and sacrifices , We find, however, no indication that any such occult sects had any influence on the Chandellas The first Chandella king Chandravarmana was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva

Shaivism, as such was not separate from Brahmanism The Vedic gods were also held in high esteem as would be clear from the reference in *Mahoba Khand* where the sage Brihaspati descends from his heavenly abode to write the horoscope[4] of the child Chandravarman , and he, the Moon and Kuber, Lord of wealth, gave him lessons on polity[5] Reference of Indra has been made to say that Hemvati became widow due to the displeasure of Indra [6]

The Vishnu worship prevailed over worship of other gods, as is evident from the number of Vishnu shrines at the place, yet there appears no disregard to Shiva Worship of Vishnu as popular godhead was prevalent among the Chandella rulers is evident from several inscriptions in which the record either begins and ends with invocation to God Vasudeva with the words—'*Om namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*' [7],

or mentions of the erection of a Vishnu temple by a particular king, or compares a king with Vishnu The kings whose inscriptions have either invocation to Vishnu or who have been compared with Vishnu are Yashovarmana, Devalabdhi, Kirtivarmana, Jayavarmana, Purushottam, Viravarmana, Trailokyavarmana, Madanavarmana, Paramardi and Bhojavarmana

Seven of the ten incarnations of Vishnu have been located on the walls of the temples , Varaha, Matsya, Balarama, Rama, Kurma, Nrisimha and Vamana. The left are Krishna, Buddha and Kalki [8] The presence of Vamana image in the sanctum of one of the temples may very well indicate that temples dedicated to other incarnations of Vishnu may have existed It is, therefore, not wrong to deduce that the one Buddha image found at Khajuraho is from one of them

Prabodhachandrodaya indicates that Buddhism was on the decline when the work was composed and undoubtedly this must have been due to the admission of young women as Bhikkhunis and the freedom enjoyed by the Buddhist Bhikkhus A Buddhist Bhikkhu exclaims that, "How excellent is the religion of the Saugatas, which grants both sensual enjoyments and eternal felicity , it permits us to inhabit elegant houses and to possess women obedient to our wills , it removes the restriction as to the time of eating , it allows us to recline on soft beds and to pass the shining moonlit nights in amours with young damsels"[9] A story is given in *Dashakumaracharitam*, of some Kalahakantaka of Mathura who goes to Ujjain to win the love of Nitambavati, wife of an old merchant He bribes a Shramanika with pieces of cloth taken from corpses[10] and obtains her services for influencing Nitambavati

Buddhist Bhikkhus as well as the Jaina Kshapanaka who appear vulnerable to women and wine, were objects of contempt In chapter 3 of *Prabodhachandrodaya* a woman named Karuna shrieks out of fear on seeing a naked Jaina ascetic and says "friend, a devil, a devil"[11] A Bhikkhu and Kshapanaka are condemned by a Kapalika who preaches to them that until one has not physically enjoyed the pleasures of life, like Chandrachuda (Shiva) who though being an ascetic engages in amorous play with his consort Parvati, one cannot attain *moksha* [12]

Illustrating the pleasures of the senses the Kapalika orders a woman named Shraddha to catch hold of the Bhikkhu in her embrace Shraddha embraces the ascetic who gets excited by her touch and exclaims "Oh, pleasant to touch Kapalini I must have embraced a number of women but never before I experienced the immense pleasure as I did now Swearing hundred times in the name of Buddha I would

desire again being embraced by you Aho, Kapalika, I envy the *Soma-Siddhanta* way It is wonderful religion I forsake the disciplines of Buddhism Kindly initiate me to the Paramesvara Siddhantam and you be my Acharya Give me Parameshvari Diksha[13] (lesson) The Kapalika then orders Shraddha to embrace the Kshapanaka also The sensuous embrace of the woman makes the Jaina ascetic to exclaim, "Oh, Arhana ! What pleasurable touch of the Kapalini Beautiful lady ! embrace me again (speaks to himself) my senses are being intoxicated, but there is no escape, I cannot hide my pleasure A Shramana becomes helpless when a lady with beautiful breasts and eyes embraces him Aho, the sight of a Kapalika itself is the way to pleasure and *moksha* Hear, Kapalika I offer myself as your servant Please give me Diksha of disciple of the Mahabhairava"[14]

The Kapalika then offers them wine They drink, sing and dance and fully enjoy the sport

All these indicate the degeneration of Buddhism and Jainism and the followers of these religions must have been facing humiliation and contempt which was equally the fate of the followers of Vamamarga Tantricism Only such Jainas and Buddhists who led normal life in the society and probably belonged to the merchant class commanded respect and might have commissioned the construction of temples dedicated to Tirthankaras Hence it cannot be authoritatively stated that the king and society were completely tolerant to these religious sects

The kings might have been paying respect to other religions as he was supposed to do so according to *Mansollasa* which says that, "the king is supposed not to have malice against the deities of other faiths He must not speak against them He must on seeing every God and temple which may fall in his way, bow in reverence and regard A king who observes these principles finds place in heaven and prospers with fortunes by the blessings of all the Gods"[15]

From the inscriptions it can be contended that the Chandella kings had "wonderful spirit of religious tolerance and also due to the fact that Vishnu, Shiva and some Jaina temples lie in close vicinity in Khajuraho The Hindu priests of the time as always were strictly puritans and intolerant in this regard They had, probably, unquestionable freedom and rights in the affairs of religion and it is not impossible that the king obeyed the priest and consulted him in the matters of religious and political importance The *Arthashastra* mentions that, "The king must obey the priest in the manner a pupil

obeys his teacher, a son his father, and servant his master"[16] In *Shukraniti* the priest is considered to be the ideal and the first man to look after the kingdom[17] The priest according to *Shukraniti* must be well-versed in the Shadangas of the *Veda* and expert in archery Fearing whom the king may be forced to act righteously[18] *Mansollasa* also mentions that the priest who is well-versed in the three learnings, law, peace, nutrition, etc, is suitable for appointment as the royal priest[19] The king, therefore, could not have acted on his free will To say that the Chandella kings were tolerant to other religions may not, however, illustrate their true character If at all the religious tolerance existed it was in the priests The present Jaina temple complex is far away from the Shiva temple site So it may not be incorrect to presume that the Jaina temples were allowed to be built only on the outskirts of the old Khajuraho city or probably where the Jaina habitation was concentrated The arrangement of the temples show that the Vishnu and Shiva temples were grouped together in a very much planned way while nothing is known of the reason for building the Jaina temple complex away from the main complex

As regards patronage given to the temples it may be said that the kings had no objection to the flourishing of the Jaina religion in their kingdom but to say that they erected the Jaina temples and installed Jaina images in them would be to take too much liberty It has already been discussed and found that Buddhism and Jainism were on the decline and the Buddhist monks did not command much respect of the people The king, therefore, could not but have remained neutral to the judgement of the people and he could not have given open support disregarding the condemnation and disrespect of the priests and the majority of the people of his kingdom

Social Structure

Society represents the metaphysical and physical, individual and social as well as religious and political ideals of man Man is guided by those established beliefs and dogmas which he inherits through family traditions and knowledge The country had been over-run by many foreign powers with whom migrated in this country new faiths and beliefs There has been a continuous influx and intermingling of thoughts which changed the way of life of the people along with their beliefs and dogmas There came the Greeks, the Shakas, the Hunas, the Kushanas and the Mughals who ruled over smaller or vast territories of the subcontinent and made an indelible mark on the social life of the people

When the Chandellas came to power, the social pattern all over North India was similar to a great extent and politically the whole country was disturbed with the end of the Gupta power Due to a wide upsurge of the local rulers to free themselves from the Gupta over-lordship there was a constant evolution in the forms of society Everywhere there was panic and uncertainity The kings engaged themselves in political conflicts with swaying supremacy The life of people in all the states of North India was restive and full of chaotic conditions

The above conditions may be witnessed in the relations of the Chandellas with the Kalachuris The Khajuraho inscription of Chandella Yashovarman dated V S 1011 mentions that he defeated the Kalachuris It is, however, interesting to note that "Yashovarman's father Harsha had been granted freedom from fear by the Kalachuri king Kokkalla (c 875-925 A D) as recorded in the Benares Grant of Karna [20]

The Chandellas and the Kalachuris were in a sort of friendly political alliance, which had most probably been cemented by the marriage of Kokkalla with a Chandella princess Natta or Nattakhya-devi [21]

Friendly relations between two neighbouring kingdoms could not last long which broke for trifle matters of individual or territorial disputes

The Chandellas, by virtue of their having helped their over-lords the Pratiharas in the conflict with the Rashtrakutas, had established themselves as a powerful force and in course of time declared their independent status as kings S K Mitra points out that "Kshitipala (Mahipala) in his attempt to rebuild the Pratihara power, was aided by some of his feudatories including the Chandellas The Khajuraho inscription claims for Chandella Harsha the unique distinction of restoring Kshitipaladeva on the throne"[22]

The Chandellas were, however, forced to settle in Bundelkhand in the Vindhya region which was inhabited mostly by backward people

Whatever Chandella records available to us reveal the existence of the four *varnas* of the society, viz the Brahmana, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya and the Shudra [23] It is evident from these that the position of the Brahmanas was the highest[24] and the great honour and privileges enjoyed by them are clearly evident[25] The Brahmanas were appointed to officiate as Rajpurohits, ministers and counsellers [26] They, however, "kept themselves engaged in the performances of six-fold duties"[27] They were given "land and dwellings as well as gold,

money, grains and cows"[28], and were also appointed as priests[29] and "they were also employed in high administrative offices"[30]

Various Khajuraho records prove that lands, dwellings and valuable gifts in connection with erection of temples were given to priests and Brahmanas The priests looked after the temples and conducted the daily worship [31]

The other prominent section of the society was that of the Kayasthas, who enjoyed great influence and responsibility [32] They too like the Brahmanas "enjoyed a high position in society, and were apparently regarded as a class of intellectuals, who besides having knowledge of the ancient books, knew the art of civil administration"[33]

Insufficient mention of the Kshatriya class is made in the records except for the Chandellas who are described as the "Kshatriya of a high order"[34] The *Prithviraj Raso* says that "Svamihita" or "welfare of the master" is the "supreme objective of a Kshatriya The warrior should, if required, freely lay down his life"[35]

It is pointed out by N S Bose that, "Only two specific mention of the Kshatriya caste are found in the Chandella records The Ajayagadh Stone Inscription of Paramardi's time records the building of a Chautra by one Rauta Sihada, son of Raut Santana of the Kshatriya caste [36] Another inscription refers to a Rauta who was also a Kshatriya"[37] It is, however, noticeable that, "From the Gupta period onward thirty-six clans of the Rajputra take the place of the old noble families"[38], claiming their descent from renowned sages or Gods of Vedic and Puranic ages The Chandellas too "trace their descent from the Moon", and "Chandatreya has been adopted as the clan-name of the family in their epigraphic records after the name of the sage Chandratreya, who has been claimed to be the progenitor of the family"[39] The Kshatriyas were chiefly warriors as "Manu declares that the bearing of arms is the means of subsistence"[40] for the Kshatriyas, but since "Agriculture must have been one of the principal occupations"[41] it is most likely that many of the Kshatriyas were peasants but joined the army when their country was attacked by alien forces

The other two classes of the Vaishya and the Shudra must have been known by their trade as "No mention of the terms Vaishya and Shudra is found in the inscriptions"[42] In *Prabodhachandrodaya*, however, a Buddhist Bhikkhu mentions that the religion of the Saugatas permitted them "to inhabit elegant houses and to possess women" of the Vanik or the trader's class[43], etc

Thus we find an indication here the that Vaishyas were a part of the

Chandella subject and were a prosperous people They were probably the followers of either the Buddhist or the Jaina religion which gave an easy access to the Shramanas of these faiths to their women folk from whom they obtained the alms

Specifically they must have had a respectable place in the society by virtue of their wealth Occasionally some Vaishyas must have held important portfolios in the administration

For the Shudra the classification like that available in the description of Vatsyayana may be accepted that, "Many of the craftsmen no doubt formed separate castes that varied according to their occupation but were commonly included under the general name of Shudra"[44] Romila Thapar observes that, "The actual work of cultivation was done entirely by the peasant who was generally of Shudra caste"[45]

The Shudras must have been allowed to settle in separate colonies for having different religious and social codes of conduct and way of life Even the painter or sculptor was considered either Shudra or cultivator It was these that formed "the bulk of fighting force"[46]

There must have been the outcastes like Chandalas in the Chandella kingdom who "were not allowed to enter village and towns except to do scavenging work Their touch was considered defiling even by Shudras"[47]

We find in *Dashakumaracharita* mention of Kirata, Kola, Bhila, Shabaras and Pulindas who lived in the forests and were joined by those who preferred their way of life

The position of women in the Chandella kingdom is not known Their place probably was limited to the household only Recognition of their honour and protection of their chastity "from all kinds of danger and harm was apparently regarded as a sacred duty"[48] of men.

Polygamy was not uncommon as "is indicated by the expression 'Sapatni' (co-wife) in the Khajuraho Rock Inscription V. S 1059, V 59 and by the names of three queens of Madanavarman furnished by the Bharat Kala Bhavan Plates"[49] Exogamy was, however, strictly discouraged by the society and severe punishment devised for those who married outside their *varna*, "Harsha Chandella married a suitable lady of equal caste, who sprang from the Chahamana family"[50] "Marriage withing ones own caste (*varna*) seems to have already become the general rule "[51]

The women were expected to be faithful to their husbands and, therefore, the rite of *sati* i e sacrifice of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands was practised by the Kshatriya women atleast of the

royal family The women who wanted to live as widows were expected to lead their life in austerity to remove the *sindura* mark along with the jewellery[52] such as, necklaces[53] of pearls, etc "The puranic idea of womanly chastity and devotion to the husband was upheld "[54] "It is undeniable that the state of the widow was looked upon with a certain aversion, and in the *Jatakas* the term Vidhavaputta, 'son of a widow', is an insult "[55] We find in the story of the origin of the Chandellas, Hemvati, a widow, realising her union with Moon-God as social degradation and insult she prayed to the Moon-God, "How shall my dishonour be effaced"[56] ? She further asks the Moon-God, when he told her that her son would become a king, that, "you would make my son a king no doubt, but I shall be made to suffer in Hell"[57] Then the Moon-God prescribed some expiatory rites for her "When your son will be of sixteen years of age, he will perform a Bhandyayajna, whereby your sin will be washed away"[58] This story, actually, refers to the state of the widows in the society

The above accounts of the social condition in the Chandella kingdom indicates that the society had very strict rules for its various constituents The upper classes of the society must have dominated the entire structure The priests of the temples being very much powerful, the temples were the places where all social and religious disputes were settled The king's presence on important occasions was obligatory who accorded his consent to the strictures passed by the leaders of the society and religious heads

The people of the Chandella kingdom must have been staunch puritans, they must not have allowed the esoteric rites to influence their life They must not have even tolerated the degenerated Buddhist and Jaina Bhikkhus who were gradually submitting to the principles

The society of Vamamarga of the time was undergoing a great test of survival amidst reactionary forces which corrupted the simple people with the allurement and the allowance of sensuous pleasures for the attainment of salvation The depiction of erotic figures on the temple shrines in Khajuraho is probably nothing but the power of the Tantricism written on the wall of time This reflects the spirit of assimilation which saved the religion of this country from various alien forces and effectively checked the advance of the Vamamarga into the society It reflects the treatment which was adopted to fight the virus attacking the people from within, similar to the treatment in which a thorn in the sole of a foot is pulled out with the help of yet another thorn

Society and religion form the shapes of the gods It happened

so with the society of the time The priest or the king would not have dared to fashion the popular and prominent gods in the manner they have been done in the temples not only at Khajuraho but at different places in India, until they obtained favourable verdict of the masses For the purpose of transcending the sex, the two essential matters, the male and female—in act of love were conceived as Purusha and Prakriti as human and divine elements respectively

The society has, among other forces, art as its mouthpiece through which the individual is influenced "Like religion and myth, custom and code, art no doubt is an effective agency or tool in the hands of society, race or social class to mould the individual's faiths, opinions and wishes, aiding him in his adjustment and attainment of peace and harmony with the world "[59]

Thus it would not be wrong to contemplate that the erotic subjects in the temples were conceived in conformity with the society The society of middle ages certainly reflects the influence of Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra* in the context of the life of individuals Vatsyayana appears to preach no doctrine and belief which probably created confusion and chaos It would have been better if the ancient beliefs were strengthened forces and no experiment was done in haste And the result of the changes made in the pattern of the religious setting invited ill-luck and sharp reaction mostly from people so that the temples suffered the neglect of the people after a very short period



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ELSEWHERE is given a full list, with all necessary details, of resthouses and dak-bungalows in which accommodation is available for tourists The fees, payable in advance, are Rs 2 per person per day and night, (24 hours) Passes for the use of these bungalows must be obtained before starting on the tour Fees for Tibet bungalows are Re 1/- per person, per 24 hrs Passes for these are issued by the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, Sikkim

In the unforeseen event of a halt being made at a bungalow for which passes have not been obtained, double rates, viz Rs 4 must be paid to the chowkidar, and a note to this effect made in the Visitors' Book

Where there are no dak-bungalows, no charge is made for the use of camping grounds

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The same rules as laid down for Sikkim Bungalows apply to those in Tibet All breakages must be paid for at the time of the visit at rates

अहो पुण्य कापालिकचरितमहो श्लाघ्य सोमसिद्धान्त । आश्चर्योऽय धर्म । भो महाभाग, सर्वथा, सर्वथा बुद्धानुशासनमस्माभिरुत्सृष्टम् । प्रविष्टा स्म पारमेश्वर सिद्धान्तम् । तदाचार्यस्तव शिष्योऽहम् । प्रवेश्य मा पारमेश्वरी दीक्षाम् ।

Ibid, pp 118-19

14 क्षपणक —(सरोमाञ्चम् ।) अहो अरिहन्त, अहो अरिहन्त, कापालिनीए फलसुह । सुन्दलि, देहि देहि पुणोवि अकपालिम् । (स्वगतम् ।) अरे महन्तो क्खु इन्दिअविआलो उवत्थिदो तो अत्थि कोवि उवाओ । कि एत्थ जुत्तम् । भोदु । पिच्छिआए ढकिस्सम् ।

अयि पीणघणत्थणसोहणि पलितत्थकुलगविलोअणि ।
जई लमसि कावालिणीभावहि सावका कि कलिस्सदि ॥

अहो कावालिअदसवण ज्जेव्व इक्क सोक्खमोक्ख साहणम् ।
भो कावालिअ, हग्गे तुहके सम्मद दासो सवुत्तो । मपि । Ibid

15 अन्येषामपि देवाना निन्दा द्वेष च वर्जयेत् ।
देव देवकुल दृष्ट्वा नमस्कुर्या न लघदेत् ॥
एव य आस्तिक भावमाश्रित समतागत ।
सर्वदेवप्रसादेन लभते सम्पद वराम् ॥ Mansollasa, 1 11 105-106

16 'तमाचार्य शिष्य , पितर पुत्रौ, भृत्य स्वामिनमिव चानुवर्तेत ।'

Kautilya, Arthashastra, 1 9 16

17 'पुरोधा प्रथम श्रेष्ठ सर्वेभ्यो राजराष्ट्रभृत् ।' Shukraniti, 2 74 1

18 मन्त्रानुष्ठानसम्पन्नस्त्रैविष्य कर्मतत्पर ।
जितेन्द्रियो जितक्रोधो लोभमोहविवर्जित ॥
षडङ्गवित् सागधनुर्वेदविच्चार्थधर्मवित् ।
यत्कोपभीत्या राजापि धर्मनीतिरतो भवेत् ॥ Ibid, 2 77-78

19 त्रय्या च दण्डनीत्या च शान्तिकर्मणि पौष्टिके ।
आथर्वणे च कुशलः स स्याद् राजपुरोहित । Mansollasa, 2 2 60.

20 'सख्ये—सख्या—बलव्यजेष्ठ गतभियस—वेदिराजम् हठात् ।' E I I pp 127, 132
21 Ibid, pp 39-40
22 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch III, pp 34-35
23 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 169
24 Ibid
25 N S Bose, ibid, Ch VII, p 151
26 S K Mitra, ibid
27 'षत-कर्म्यभिरत ' E 1 K p 146 V 53, quoted by S K Mitra, ibid, p 170
28 'कनक-गो-धरा-दानम्' E 1 XX, p 127, L 16-17, quoted by S K Mitra, Ibid, p, 171
29. Ibid, p 172
30 Ibid, Ch XIII, p 181

31. S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XIII, p 187
32 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 174
33 N S Bose, ibid, Ch VII, p 154
34 S K Mitra, ibid
35 'स्वामिहित तन दियव', Prithviraj Raso, p 96 and पहिले स्वामि हिते शिश दिय फिर पुच्छव मम वत', ibid, p 79
36 N S Bose, ibid, Ch VII, p 152, quoting from ASR Vol XXI, p 49-50
37 Ibid, ASR, ibid, p 49
38 Louis Renou, "The Civilization in Ancient India", Ch 1, trans p 46
39 'चन्द्रात्रेय-मुनेर महीयति कुले'
Nanyaura Plate 'A', XVI, p 201, Ll 1-2 and 'चन्द्रात्रेय नरेन्द्रानाम वश' ibid, p 208 cited in S K Mitra, ibid, Ch II, p 12
40 Manu, X 79 cited in H C Chakladar's "Social Life in Ancient India", Ch III p 74
41 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 179
42 N S Bose, ibid, Ch VII, p 154
43 'आवासो लयन मनोहरमभिप्रायानुरूपा वणिङ्-नार्यो—'
Prabodhachandrodaya, Ch 3, 9 1, p 105
44 H C Chakladar, ibid, Ch III, p 77
45 Romila Thapar, ibid, Vol 1, Ch II, p 248
46 47 P Thomas, "Hindu Religion, Customs & Manners", Ch II, p 20
48 S K Mitra, Ch XII, p 177
49 Ibid p 176
50 N S Bose, ibid, Ch VII, p 155 refering E I, Vol 1, p 126 Vs 20-21
51 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 177
52 'नि सिन्दूरित' E 1, I, p 200, V 34 and 'सिन्दूरभूषणविवर्जितामास्यपद्म', ibid, p 129, V 41
53 'उत्सृष्टहार-वलय-कुचमण्डल' S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 176
54 S K Mitra, ibid, Ch XII, p 176
55 Louis Renou, ibid, Ch II, p 67
56 'म्हा कलक कोभिट्टहय उदुपति कहहु विचारि'
Prithviraj Raso, p 10 quoted by S K Mitra, ibid Appendix, A, p 22
57 'भुव पुत्र करिहै राजु म्हा कहतु नर्क समाजु' Ibid
58 'षोडस वर्ष कुमार होई धुखल दाय
भाडुग्र जग करि भुमितल पातक पुज बहाय ।।'
Prithviraj Raso, p 117, cited ibid, p 23
59 R K Mukerjee, "The Social Function of Art", Intr. pp X-XI

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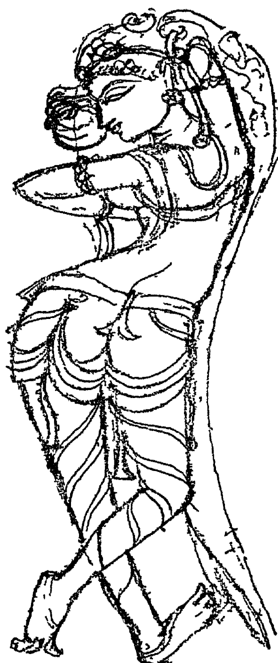
Khajuraho Temples

1. Brief Survey

Amidst eightyfive exquisitely beautiful temples and equal number of lakes and gardens around each one of them one might have felt having come to a divine land and amidst enchanting musical sounds of the ghunghrus, the anklets, various instruments and hymns ringing in the air and witnessing the devotional dances of most charming *devadasis* one might have imagined the glory and glitter of the fabulous court of Lord Indra, the god-head

Even today, looking at the sculptures of the existing temples it may be fancied that the gods, goddesses and apsaras from their celestial abode had descended to earth—chose to stay—transformed to images in stone and arranged themselves in charming postures portraying human love and love-sports

Lying in close vicinity of a mountain range, one of the off-shoots of the great Vindhyachala in the central belt of the



country, the temples seem to form yet, another range of high mountain Their heights and masses in the manner of the hills that face them

Every morning the sun rises from behind the mountain to add charm and glamour to the temples, which stand facing eastward, with its rays reaching the *mandapa* or the assembly hall, prostrate in calm and humble reverence before the chief deity seated in the *garbhagriha* or the sanctum As the temples glitter in the sunshine the mountain cannot remain unnoticed

The former city of Khajuraho must have stretched from the foot of the mountain, where the remains of the dwelling houses still are found scattered, to as far as the present northwest temple complex , and probably it flourished on both the banks of the river Khudai which flows at about less than a kilometer on the south of the present Khajuraho village

According to the *Mahoba Khand* of *Prithviraj Raso* written by Chand Bardai eightyfive temples were built overnight by the divine builder Vishvakarma at the request of Chandiavarman, son of Hemvati She said to him "You must relieve me of the sin of bearing a child in my widowhood by performing Bhandya Yajna[1] " "construct 85 temples and equal number of lakes and gardens attached to each of them "[2] Chandravarman invoked Vishvakarma who built the eightyfive temples and the images of all gods and their carriers and Lord Shiva in less than four hours' time

Since the inscriptions of the later kings of the dynasty mention the erection of some temples by them dedicated either to Vishnu or Shiva and thus these 85 temples ascribed to Chandravarman seem to have been symbolic shrines on the sites of which the later kings got the temples built

The architecture of the Khajuraho temples has a marked difference in style, decoration and sculpture from other temples in North and South India Such a refined and developed state of architecture shows the vast potentialities of the artists Though the temples are not of enormous size as those of South India but the carvings and sculptures are so greatly ingenious in style, in expression and in forms as great in numbers

All these voluminous seven part or *saptanga* structures gradually rise upward on a high terrace The main *shikhara* is surrounded by small replicas of *shikharas* clung close to it and all these together give a feeling of a compact mountain peak along with a family of small peaks Long parallel projections have been added vertically on the sides of the shrine walls to accentuate the height of the temples

The outer surface of the shrine walls as well as of the sanctum walls have sculptural embellishment almost in round

On the outer walls the sculptures have been so designed as to concentrate in horizontal division of two or three parallel bands and a narrow carved band of figures on top and bottom of these, all around the three sides with well-provided breaks of balconied openings projecting out of the walls These are meant to allow light and air to the transcepts or the *mahamandapas*, the ambulatory passages around the sanctums or the *garbhagrihas*, the assembly halls or the *mandapas*, the extended ambulatory passages around *mandapas* and the entrance porticoes or the *ardha-mandapas* The biggest temple of the group—the Kandariya Mahadeo has in all 9 such openings 2 each on the side walls, the *mandapa* and the *ardha-mandapa* and one at the rear part

The high terrace on the platform of which the temples are erected had 4 subsidiary shrines on four corners to make the temples a composite whole of five parts or the *panchayatana* type Thus the terrace was a necessity rather than a style

The characteristic features of the temples are the sculptures of the mithuna or the amatory couples of humans as well as of gods, the lovelorn nayikas and of principal deities, the Regents of the quarters or the Dikpalas and the covering deities Besides these there are small panels depicting various aspects of human life The oft-repeated sculptures are those of Naginis with 3- or 7- headed snakehoods and Leographs

The arrangement of these embellishments on the shrine in the Jangha of the temple clearly shows that one vertical column consists one panel each from the horizontal bands and only one aspect either of apsaras or of gods or of Leographs or of Naginis is depicted in it The main gods have been comfortably placed in niches provided for them either outside or inside around the ambulatory passage

On minute observation it would be found that with the exception of the Kandariya Mahadeo Temple on all the temples there are in the niches and panels Regents of the Quarters, Navagrahas, some of the manifestations of God Vishnu, Brahma, the Sun, Agni, Ganesha, Parvati, Lakshmi, Bhairavi, Nandi, Shiva, etc The Kandariya temple has only Shiva, Parvati, Nandi, Rudra, Ganesha, Bhairava and Bhairavi images, all over, which all belong to the Shiva family or depict the different forms of Shiva himself

Arts flourished without interruption and this is why so many magnificent temples could be built There existed no rivalry among

the worshippers of Vishnu and Shiva for the followers of other faiths like Jainism and Buddhism The religious life abounded harmonious relations

There are some panels showing artists working on stone, musicians and dancers, people drinking wine, teachers imparting religious lessons and there is love and sexual life and also armies marching in full armoury and elephants and horses Everywhere there is action—life in its prime of youthful glory—enjoyment and pleasure—men and women, and gods and semigods All this proves the incessant normal and peaceful life lived by the people The responsibility of the continued construction of the temples must have been inherited by the successors to the throne along with the royal heritage.

The main temples and some of the exceptionally rare features and sculptures of these are

1 *The Matangeshvara Temple*

The construction of this temple is simple in comparison to other temples From the *Jangha* or the body of the temple there is a gradual latticed upward slope the *kantha* or the neck on which is placed a large *amlaka* The *shikhara* or the finial has a group of round discs and balls and cones—not the auspicious *puranakumbha* or the full pitcher The shrine walls have no sculptural embellishment There is a great Shiva Lingam and equally enormous *pithika* or its seat inside the sanctum

2 *The Lakshmana Temple*

There is a narrow panel all around the terrace wall in which the royal army is seen moving through the forests to meet the opponent When the army is camping, the head of the army is seen resting with female attendants and some other men to engage in love and sexual sports

The image in the sanctum is that of Vishnu having three heads—one on the left of lion and the other on the right of boar (both broken) probably symbolizing the power and gravity like the lion and the boar, respectively

3 *The Kandariya Temple*

Here different aspects and forms of the Lord Shiva have been repeatedly placed in the sculptured bands and in the niches on the outer wall as well as on the inner No other deity has been given a

prominent place A unique figure of a goddess is seated on a peacock in a niche on the north side

4 *The Devi Jagadambi Temple*

This is originally a Vishnu temple on which many incarnations of Lord Vishnu have been placed Of all these, the Matsyavatar or the Fish Incarnation peculiarly carries a fish on his shoulders

5 *The Chitragupta Temple*

The image in the sanctum is that of the Sun This indicates the presence of the Vedic deities in some of the main temples

In the small bands around the temple wall prominent gods have been shown being attended by females who are pouring *soma* the ambrosia in the cup held in the hands of the gods

6 *The Vishvanatha Temple*

On the outer wall of the sanctum in the niches there are figures of Ardhanarishvara, dancing Shiva and Shiva with 10 arms It has some very amusing amorous figures in the central panels of the outer walls

7 *The Parvati Temple*

The image of the goddess in the sanctum is standing on a makara

8 *The Vamana Temple*

A beautiful image of the god Vamana, an Incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the mendicant god is in the sanctum This may indicate the existence of temples dedicated to other avataras also

9 *The Jawari Temple*

The image in the sanctum is that of the Sun wearing long boots The present name of the temple comes from its being situated within the agricultural field oaf jawar

10 *The Adinatha Temple*

This Temple has several Nandi figures (bull headed) Here again the peacock throned goddess with eight arms is situated in a niche Two other rare images in the niches are—one of the lion-headed goddess probably the female aspect of Nrisimha Incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and the other is of an eight armed goddess seated on a tortoise

11 *The Parshvanatha Temple*

There are three very rare and the only Mithuna figures of their kind on the walls—one is of Balaram and Revati the second is of Rama and Sita and the third is of Madana—the Divinity of Lust and Rati

12 *The Duladeo Temple*

This Shiva temple has figures which have very delicate expressions and fine features, quite different from other temples

The Jaina puritans must have disowned the temple because of the amorous theme on it The probable existence of Jaina temples nearby cannot be overruled

13 *The Chaturbhuja Temple*

This is the only temple which faces to the west

A large Vishnu image of moie than 9 feet in height stands in the sanctum This is an extremely beautiful image of Lord Vishnu

A sun image sitting on his chariot of seven horses is in a niche on the east and an Ardhanarishvara Shiva image in a niche on the south wall add still more peculiar features to this lone temple

14 *The 24 Jains Temples*

Many of the images placed in these modern temples are modern too including a 14 feet image of the great Mahavir

15 Remains of a Jain temple known as the Ghantai temple lie near the present Jain temple complex

16 *The Chausata Jogini Temple*

Built in c 900 A D is supposed to be the earliest of Khajuraho temples There were sixtyfive cells all around the massive platfarm in the centre of which there is left an oblong courtyard 104′ × 60′ Now only fortytwo cells in ruined state have survived Images of goddess Mahishasur Mardini, Yogini, Maheshvari and three-headed Brahmani are the only four pieces that have survived A few other temples of smaller dimensions are scattered in the vicinity They are

17 *Hanuman Temple* c 316 Harsha era or c 922 A D

18 *Brahma Temple* on the bank of Khajuraho Sagar

19 *Nandi Temple* c 1000 A D

20 *The Mahadeva Temple* there is no sanctum

21 *Lalgun Mahadeva* Only sanctum survives

22 *Devi Temple* Opposite Lakshmana Temple

23 *Varaha Temple* Opposite Lakshmana Temple

24 *The Kanka Math* Northeast of Vamana Temple

2. Sculpture in general

The temples of Khajuraho have series of sculpture apart from the erotic ones It is very interesting to note the arrangement of the sculptures on the walls of the shrine, sanctum or *garbhagriha,* main hall or *mandapa,* the transcepts or *mahamandapas,* the portico or *ardha-mandapa* and the architraves

In Kandariya Mahadeo temple besides the deities placed in the niches we have three principal tiers of sculptural embellishment on three faces of the temple, and these are fixed to form the vertical columns which help to magnify the 'soaring impulse'. On the body of these columns appear the statues of Lord Shiva and his manifestations or attendants Bhairava and Nandi Flanking these on either side there the female figures of Nayikas or Apsaras engaged in various erotic activities There are two such main vertical projections on the south-eastern, southern, north-eastern and northern walls whereas three each on the south-western and north-western corners There are three faces on each of these columns, which thus make rather square-columns, and on each face the order of the statues is as described earlier in all the three tiers The southern and northern walls exhibit three rectangular panels, one each in a tier, which have groups of lovers engaged in sex-play The sculptures of the Lokpalas and covering deities or the Parivara Devatas are placed in the niches immediately below the balconied windows intercepting the vertical rows of the sculptured columns There are nine such windows in this temple , four in the *ardha-mandapa,* two each in *mandapa* and *mahamandapa* and one at the rear There are many small-sized niches on the body the many *shikharas* on each sections of the temple in which there are images of various deities The outer wall of the sanctum has two tiers of sculptures and has a repetition in the order of the statues on the columns without The niches inside the temple exhibit the principal deities and the Parivara Devatas

An uncommon feature of this largest temple of Khajuraho is the absence of two-figured erotic panel in the outer embellishment We would, however, find many on the outer wall of the sanctum This feature is discernible in the Vishvanatha temple also

Broadly analysing we can put the sculptures of Khajuraho temples in the following groups

(a) Cult images
(b) Other gods and goddesses
(c) Vyantar devatas
(d) Nayikas

(e) Erotic mithunas
(f) Animals and birds
(g) Friezes
(h) Design and decorative patterns

(a) CULT IMAGES

It has already been discussed as to how the religious tolerance of the Chandella kings encouraged Brahmanism, Shaivism, Jainism and Buddhism to flourish side by side in the kingdom and many temples dedicated to the gods of these cults were constructed under their patronage

1 *Lakshmana temple*

The image in the sanctum is that of a threeheaded Vishnu The head on the right is of lion and that on the left of Varaha or boar

2 *Kandariya temple*

The sanctum has the Shiva-Lingam

3 *Jagadambi temple*

The temple may have been of Vishnu

4 *Chitragupta temple*

The image in the sanctum is of the Sun.

5 *Vishvanatha temple*

There is a Lingam placed in the sanctum.

6 *Parshvanatha temple*

Unusually the gate immediately after the open portico has two lintels built one over the other

The erotic sculptures on the wall of the sanctum correspond with those of other temples in the main group

The ambulatory and the *mandapa* have been crowded with many pedestals, as are generally placed below a cult image in the sanctum, on which statues of Tirthankaras are installed

On the shrine we find various gods of the Hindu pantheon in the size of which there is no Jaina sculpture

7 *Adinatha temple*

The temple wall is devoid of the characteristic balconied window as is also in the case of Parshvanatha temple There is the presence of goddesses Ganga, Yamuna and Chandika and some of the Sapta-Matrikas in the niches

8 *Jawari and Vamana temples*

Both the temples are dedicated to Vishnu and the images in the

sanctum are of Vishnu and Vamana, the dwarf mendicant manifestation of Vishnu, respectively

9 *Duladeo temple*

There is a Shiva-Lingam in the sanctum

10 *Chaturbhuja temple*

It has famous and tall image of Chaturbhuja Vishnu

The museum displays a number of cult images which are unquestionably those belonging to the temples now totally extinct Out of the Vaishnava group there are the Mauna-Vratin-Vishnu, Vishnu on the serpent couch and others In the Shaiva group we find a devastatingly beautiful image of Parvati whose arms are broken The physiognomy and the body has supreme delicacy and charm with suprahuman expression This image may be considered the finest of the cult images so far discovered The Jaina group has the usual images of Mahavira and the Shasana Devatas The only image of Buddha found is a fairly good example of craftsmanship Besides these an unusually large image of Ganesha is an only example of its kind

Despite the rigidness in the postures of these Jaina images the delicacy in the limbs and the ideal proportions of the body elevate them to the suprahuman compassionate divineness possessed by the Buddha images of the Gupta period

(b) OTHER GODS AND GODDESSES

Religious texts like *Vishnu Purana* and the *Shilpa Shastras* have elaborate descriptions of the deities, images of whom are to be placed on the walls of the temples

The gods, goddesses and Lokapalas and the directions assigned to them according to *Agni Purana* are as following

East Indra, Varaha, Lakshmi and Kuber

South-East Agni, Parashuram, Chandi, Vamana and Durga

South Bhutaganas, Yama, Nrisimha, Matrikas, Skanda, Ganesha and Shiva

South-West Chandika Pitra, Daityas, Rama, Ambika, Nrisimha and Sun

West Varuna, Shridhara, Sun and other eight Grahas

North-West Yayu, Naga, Vamana, Saraswati, Hayagriva and Brahma

North Yaksha, Kuber, Hayagriva, the ten incarnations of Vishnu

North-East Chandisha, Mahesha, Vasudeva, Lakshmi, Varaha and Shiva

The images located in the niches of various temples are—

1 *Lakshmana temple*

Gods Ganesha, Vishnu, Skanda, Sun, Hayagriva, Shiva, Nrisimha, Varaha, Brahma and Vamana ,

2 *Kandariya temple*

Gods Ganesha, Varaha, Vishnu, Nrisimha, Brahma, Bhairava, Shiva-Tandava, Shiva-Parvati, Indra-Shachi ,

Goddesses Aindri, Vaishnavi, Kaumari, Parvati, Savitri, Durga of the Sapta Matrikas ,

3 *Jagadambi temple*

Gods Vishnu, Varaha, Shiva, Brahma ,

4 *Chitragupta temple*

Gods Brahma, Shiva, Shiva-Parvati, Vishnu and Varaha ,

5 *Vishvanatha temple*

Gods Ganesha, Varaha, Brahma, Shiva, Shiva-Tandava, Shiva-Parvati and Ardhanarishvara ,

Goddesses Chamunda, Durga, Ambika ,

6 *Vamana temple*

Gods Shiva-Parvati, Varaha, Shiva, Vishnu, Bhairava, Vamana, Shiva-Parvati-Panigrahana and Shiva-Tandava ,

Goddesses Vaishnavi, Savitri of the Sapta-Matrikas

7 *Parsvanatha temple*

Gods Lakshmi-Narayana, Balarama-Revati, Kama-Rati, Rama-Sita, Shiva-Parvati, Brahma-Savitri Brahma, Shiva, Bhairava, Vishnu and Shiva ,

8 *Adinatha temple*

Goddesses Parvati, Vaishnavi, Savitri of the Sapta-Matrikas, Ganga, Yamuna and Chandika ,

9 *Duladeo temple*

Gods Bhairava, Shiva, Shiva-Tandava and Vishnu ,

10 *Chaturbhuja temple*

Gods Sun, Ardhanarishvara ,

Goddesses Nrisimhi

We do not find large size statues of the Navagrahas except that of the Sun These are, however, found in small friezes, one such piece is preserved in the museum and displays Sun, Moon, Mangala, Budha,

Brihaspati, Shukra, Shani, Rahu and Ketu The Sapta-Matrikas (the seven mothers) are also represented in small friezes, one of such example is kept in the museum, except for some beautiful large size statues placed in the niches of the Kandariya, Vamana and Adinatha temples The Sapta-Matrikas are Brahmani, consort of Brahma , Maheshvari, consort of Shiva , Kaumari, consort of Skanda , Vaishnavi, consort of Vishnu , Varahi, consort of Varaha, the Boar incarnation ; Indrani, consort of Indra , the destroyer of demon, Chamunda

There are quite many statues of gods and goddesses, placed in the niches and walls of the temples, which could be considered as some of the finest pieces of sculpture Out of these Shiva-Tandava, Chamunda and Bhairava have been carved in large number with interesting, graceful and beautiful variations in posture

Among the Jaina sculptures we have the traditional Shasana Devatas along with the Jinas There is no unusually interesting feature regarding the Jaina sculptures except for the erotic aspect that has accidentally come to be preserved on the walls of Duladeo temple

(c) VYANTARA DEVATAS

The semi-gods that are placed in the category of Vyantara Devatas are Devas, Yakshas, Nagas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Asuras, Sarpas, Suparnas (Garudas), Trees (sacred ones), Jihmagas (a class of sacred raptiles), Khagas (sacred birds), Vidyadharas, Jaladharas (sacred acquatic animals), Akashagamis (Sadhyas and Siddhas)[4], etc

We find these names in many religious texts of the Jainas, Buddhists and Hindus with some variations The Jaina literature "enumerates the Vyantara Devatas usually in this manner Pishachas, Bhutas, Yakshas, Rakshasas, Kinnaras, Kimpurushas, Mahorgas (Nagas) and Gandharvas The Buddhist texts also mention similar orders of divinities as Devas, Yakshas, Nagas, Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras and Mahorgas Various sections of Brahmanical Hindu literature contain not only the names of these, but add many more names of such mythical beings as Kumbhandas, Kabandhas, Daityas, Danavas, Apsaras, Siddhas, Sadhyas, Vidyadharas, Pramathas, Ganas,"[5] etc

The Vyantara Devatas represented in the Khajuraho temples may be identified as Devas, Yakshas, Nagas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Khagas, Vidyadharas, Apsaras, Siddhas, Ganas, etc But the most outstanding among these are the the Gandharvas, Kinnaras and the Vidya-dharas and have been placed in the third tier where there are three

bands of sculpture on some of the temple walls and in the small friezes, inside the temple, that decorate the ceilings These have been shown flying in the sky and chanting prayers, singing melodies, dancing and playing on various instruments The Gandharvas are described in *Mansara* "as having animal-like legs, the upper part being human in form with a face like that of Garuda , their arms are endowed with wings, lotus crown and colour of the shade of a flower They are also associated with sweet songs and musical instruments"[6] No distinction, however, has been made here between Gandharvas and Kinnaras The *Mayasamgraha* too simply mentions that, "The Gandharva, handsome in appearance, should be made as conferring boon on his devotees, wearing a crown and ear-ornaments, holding a club, and engaged in playing on a lyre"[7] The Gandharvas are, elsewhere, described as the fragrances, or celestial harmonies who dwell in the sky and are aspects of the sun

"The Gandharvas wear fragrance of herbs and the smell of stagnant water. They are associated with Soma, the elixir of life, whose native place they guard but which they sometimes try to monopolise They are said to possess limitless sexual power and to be attracted by women They play the part of lovers, give or refuse fecundity They steel the fetus, disturb the mind with wine, gambling and love A Gandharva is spoken of as having cured Varuna of his loss of virility with the help of an aphrodiasiac plant In later *Samhitas or Brahmanas* they are connected with the human embryo and are invoked in the nuptial rites They are shown as having great influence over unmarried girls and as taking possession of human beings "In later mythology the Gandharvas appear as benevolent singers and musicians "[8]

The other aerial spirits are the Vidyadharas who are generally described to appear in the sky in praise of good men and carry garlands of flowers, and the Kinnaras who are musicians with horseheads and "are sometime regarded as a variety of Gandharvas"[9] .

In the temples of Khajuraho the artist has depicted these celestial habitants in purely human form They are displayed as the joyful singers, dancers, musicians and garland bearers flying from heaven to earth with speed and will making the atmosphere gay and colourful as well as lively and meaningful We, however, come across these carved in the friezes and here the canonical descriptions seem to have been adhered to

The temples which display these figures are the Jawari, the Parshvanatha, the Adinatha and the Duladeo. These figures are in the

third tier which is half in width in comparison to the two tiers below it Some of these play *manjiras*, flute, drum, some carry sword, garland and others dance in graceful movements There are the Gandharva couples, too, placed in alternate recesses It is interesting to note that the male Gandharvas have seated their consorts on their hind parts, the only comfortable place available for them while in flight, and they hold them with one arm in a gentle but firm embrace They in unison chant hymans in praise of the god present in the sanctum of the teple The beauty and charm of these figures is no less in degree, movements and expressions or in the craftmanship We are suddenly reminded of the beautiful flying group of the Gandharvas in the Ajanta frescoes

(d) NAYIKAS

The temples of Khajuraho have acquired lively character chiefly with the most charming figures of Nayikas or Apsaras besides numerous other figures which all of them together throb, breath and bustle with erotic impulse and are engaged in various kinds of activities The whole atmosphere seems to be sporting with the tunes of instruments and songs, with the ecstasy in rhythms of dance, with the clamours of the marching armymen, with the shouts of animals, and with the amorous activities of lustful individuals and groups of men and women There goes on an eternal preparation for a lustful and heavenly tryst—for achieving eternal bliss and thereby release from this worldly bondage—for the divine union of the soul with the God

An allurement of the panoramic filigree of sensuous forms—of delicate and passionate human beings like tidal upsurge swaying forcefully in rhythmic movements, gloriously manoeuvering to the shores—the human souls drifting to the peaceful, serene and tranquil other world, in unceasing quest of knowledge—the eternal truth—the God

In these figures is revealed, through the characteristic representations of the sensuous and passionate statuettes, the finest and tenderest moment of the human existence, ideals and aspirations These not only tell the tale of the humans but also put forward an imaginary world of those which manifest in the intermediary world—between the human and divine existence From this intermediary world it is easy for these semi-divine bodies to either transcendentalise or humanise their activities Here they have stepped down from the state of transition to the alluring world below and appear as humans, symbolically exhibiting perfect human behaviour amidst the company of the

divine characters thronging as if to witness the sport with jealous heart, wonder and surprise

A careful study of the figures of the Nayikas would reveal a categorical development in the erotic emotion has been achieved by the artist A story of a love-lorn lady finds plastic expression in a series of figures that narrate the story, from the beginning to the end, of the tryst either successful or failure The Nayika is a maiden and in the prime of her youth she is in love The artist has portrayed her life in a documentary that covers the situations in which she spends her days and nights

We can broadly classify these figures into three groups according to their activities and associations

(1) Nayikas
(2) Shalbhanjikas
(3) Sura Sundaris

Nayikas are those which simply express their engagements in various erotic activities and are generally love-sick, excited and emotionally disturbed They are unable to hide the anxiety of their tryst

Shalabhanjikas are usually those females who, in some way or other, are shown associated with a tree motif This tree motif is a common symbol adopted since the evolution of female figures expressing their love-lorn state The earliest of these are the Yakshis of the Maurya period and similar to these in the post-Mauryan period

Sura Sundaris are those which are adept in dancing, singing and playing on instruments A good variety of these celestial singers, dancers and musicians is discernible on the temple walls Instruments played upon by these figures are flute and Veena

All these Nayikas, Shalabhanjikas and Sura Sundaris are examples of fine erotic sculpture as they behave in a manner which points out their amorously excited state of mind tending towards the desire of the appeasement of sexual drives All their expressions and actions symbolise the emotion of love experienced by them in varying degrees and intensities

The following account of the activities of all these female figures may help in forming a curriculum of their emotions during different periods of a day

We find a damsel, who probably was awake for the whole of night, stretching her limbs and yawning in desperation in the early hours of morning We find her elsewhere having taken her bath wringing her hair. She then is seen offering prayers to her family deity The

next stage shows her busy in make-up This stages has to offer many situations, like—combing hair, applying vermillion on the forehead, surma and kajal in the eyes, colouring the souls of feet, putting on ornaments, etc She is seen bewitched at her own beauty After having completed the make-up she is seen setting out on tryst In the course of her journey she meets with certain adventures—at one place a monkey comes to annoy and frighten her, at other a thorn is pricked in the sole of her foot which she tries to extricate At last her mission comes to an end when she meets her lover at an appointed place They engage themselves in many interesting activities and forget all but each other

With a little variation in the later stages we find another damsel disappointed in not finding her lover She receives a message on reading which she breaks away in bitter cries, she clears the water running down from her eyes and nose She is seen later sending a letter to her lover—probably beseeching his company at the earliest possible hour At last she finds him

On one occasion the lady is desperate and disappointed and she spoils her make-up by pulling off her jewellery, etc

There are Nayikas who on having met their lovers are seen in reminiscent mood The marks of their association with their lovers apparent in their dishevel appearance—the hair and dress—are highly suggestive of the sex-play that they had had a little while age They happily recollect the pleasures of the love—battle and the carnal experience

The other set of Nayikas depict their having achieved motherhood—the greatest honour and pride that is sought by a woman This happy tale is narrated in symbols The Nayikas carry a branch of mango fruits in one hand and a parrot—the celebrated love-bird in other. A mango tree laden with mangoes overhead is also commonly shown in this particular aspect We find some women fondling a child which is either carried by them on their waist or arms or the child is seen climbing up on their one leg

The Shalabhanjikas are located generally on the four sides of the capitals of the pillars that support the dome of the *mandapa* These are beautiful figures engaged in playing a ball, looking in mirror and applying vermillion mark, extricating a thorn from sole of her foot, and fondling a child A very few figures are left on the pillars as such the description on the activities of these beautiful pieces of sculpture could not be recorded in much detail

The Sura Sundaris display the finesse of their jewellery, hairdo,

apparel and movements They strike winsome postures as delicate and as charming as they possibly can in an effort to display their art They hear most speculative, sharp and chiselled featuies that help to intensify the fine expressions of their physiognomy

All these figures represent the semi-divine imaginary habitants of etherial space The Nayikas are the same Apsaras that are described in the epics as having been commissioned to distract and seduce the great seers, who penanced in order to achieve the eternal abode of heaven and propinquity of god Here a similar atmosphere seems to have been created by placing the figures of gods in close proximity of these figures The gods are shown unattached, unmoved, expressionless, uneffected and unaware of the villainous motives of these seducers They stand rigid, passionless, and emotionless amids the army of Eros, the love-god While on the other side these Apsaras fall an easy prey of their own assault They wander in pursuit of the fulfilment of their carnal desires with maddening intensity They appear to be completely human in appearance as well as in action and behaviour

The Nayikas, however, find mates to atone the passion burning in them and thus have no cause to continue their fruitless effort of seducing the powerful god

The suggestive attitudes of these women are the most precious and remarkable features that have helped to créate the lucious and fragrant sensuousness that pervades the temple shrines and have enriched the art of sculpture by materialising most difficult expressions in stone The noteworthy aspects of these figures are the different styles of hairdos, patterns of jewelleries, etc The erotic element so daringly represented has naturally provided a wide scope for the artist to evolve many very beautiful postures and expressions never imagined before A large variety of body forms have been skillfully used to enliven and heighten the sensuousness of the physique, the body curves and the flexibility of the flesh and bones have at places unimaginable flexion but never for a moment these destroy the delicacy, the charm and the harmony On the contrary these have given an aided three-dimensional effect despite the original carving in full round and semiround The sensuous and erotic sentiments that may specially signify the degrees to which a particular emotion has risen in a person is further expressed more effectively by unusual and unnatural postures and flexion of the figures

(e) EROTIC MITHUNAS

The word *mithuna* is very often mistaken for the amorous couple

In Sanskrit it means two or a couple Hence it is associated here with the word 'erotic' to mean a couple engaged in amorous and sexual love-sport The range to which a *mithuna* is classified as erotic is very wide A *mithuna* of god is erotic when the god holds his consort delicately by his one arm coming around her back and the fingers appear below one of her breast Again, a *mithuna* of god is erotic when the consort touches any part of the body of the god looking at him with lustful eyes This study examines since only such erotic *mithunas* that strictly belong to common amorous and sexual patterns as are human in behaviour and taste, the erotic *mithuna* of gods have, therefore, not been included

The number of erotic *mithuna* is far less in comparison to the Nayika figures which are examples of single erotic figures The erotic *mithuna* figures comprise two or more men and women and give vivid expressions of emotional frenzy, passion and extreme realism There is maddening sexual desire finding its culmination through loving fondness, unashamed approaches and sincere feelings These *mithunas* are like a fleet of emotions drifting with uncertainty towards the shores of lust The Nayikas whom we find in forlorn state, passionately erotic and sulking with indiscriminate fears experience succour, pleasure and satisfaction in the reassuring arms of their lovers A Nayika is an unhapply soul until she is caressed with the soothing words, comfortable embrace and warm passionate kisses of his man

The panels exhibiting erotic *mithunas*, though less in number, dominantly come out and subdue the charm and importance of the divine and semi-divine sculptured embellishments In these the artist has imagined extraneously decorative forms which make beautiful compositions but are at times unbelievable, physically and psychologically difficult as well as embarrassing. These are unusually funny and if taken individually may be examples of pornography

Two-figure erotic compositions are mostly displayed on the outer walls of Lakshmana, Jagadambi, Chitragupta and Duladeo temples and on the walls of the sanctum in Lakshmana, Kandariya, Vishvanatha and Parshvanatha temples The Jagadambi temple has some very fine sculptures of erotic *mithunas* on its outer wall

(f) ANIMALS AND BIRDS

Indian artist has always shown oecumenical sympathy and inclination to accommodate animals and birds within the compositional harmony of human as well as divine figures alongwith the purposeful background of the nature Since the dawn of plastic art in the country,

i e from the Mauryan period, animals have prominently figured in to serve the religious cause The Mauryan period has made use of the animals as vehicles of the Buddhist doctrine The Ashokan pillar capitals have on them bull, lion, etc which are excellent works of art Human representation in plastic art came later in the Jataka myths which were illustrated with profound devotion and skill by the Buddhist artists in great details These illustrations tell us of the evolution of Buddha through a long series of births and rebirths in the animal world The spirit that is expressed in these animal figures is the same as is expressed in the image of the compassionate Buddha of the later period The success of the artist lies in combining humanness in the animal behaviour for expressing a spiritual element and compassion The same compassionate expression is manifest in all the incarnations of Buddha in his previous births There is profound love, deep sympathy and sincere understanding of the artist for all the creatures and these inherent qualifications have passed on to the artists of every successive period of Indian art The similar attitude, of the artist of Khajuraho, shown towards the animal characters in his art is, therefore, not unusually new or surprisingly different in anyway from his predecessors

The animal figures of Khajuraho are handsome in appearance, vigorously active, and sportingly fun-loving souls They appear readily participating in all the activities in company of their masters They exhibit vigour, playful mood and extraordinary sense of gratitude by their actions The beastly instinct of cruelty common to their nature mostly remaining absent except for some occasions

The animals commonly represented here are elephants and horses Among many others we have domestic and wild animals like dogs, goats, sheeps, pigs and monkeys A few camels also have been included

These animals do not figure prominently, as the size of the panels is considerably small but these are at appreciatingly lower level offering fair chances of close observation These narrow panels run horizontally in one or two rows around the body of the temple walls and lower crease of the domes of *mandapa* and depict the exciting experiences of men and animals together in course of their advancement to an unknown destination

The platform of Lakshamana temple has, intact on four sides of its walls, a beautifully sculptured band measuring about 15 inches in height Two armies are shown, each with a battalion of elephants and horses, marching to meet each other in a prospective battle A

minute observation of the animal world as well as of social life by the artist astonishes the viewer when he finds the minor encounters met with in course of the march of the army either through a jungle or a village or during a sojourn These trifle incidents are very interesting showing an intimate touch of personal experience We have some funny compositions dealing with most pervert and unnatural designs of the sex-hungry army men The animals are shown engaged in fight and hunting spree They playfully tease each other, or furiously punish the offender animal or man , or run wildly trampling smaller animals like wild boars, rabbits, etc

The armymen resort to pleasure-hunting when camping They prepare wine and find local women to satisfy their carnal desires The erotic element expressed by these men reveals the psychology of the army men In a few rare occasions animals like a horse and a dog are found being used as tools for unnatural atonement of sexual frenzy of men and women It is unnecessary to stress that these panels provide unusually important theme for study which is absent elsewhere in usual size panels

Normally in the illustrations of the animal world we find beautiful figures of elephants and horses in variety of actions They either run amok or tread in style or furiously challange their opponents In one scene a horse and in another an elephant is let loose by its care-taker or rider on another rider In another scene an elephant is seen pushing a man with its trunk who in turn flees crying aloud for help At one place we see an elephant holding a man up in air by its trunk Thus the animals not only behave according to the orders of their masters but strike some humour or panic around them in a very natural way

In Lakshmana temple we have one narrow band with elephant motif suggesting as if the entire load of the super structure is on the back of the numerous elephants It is an appropriate application of elephant motif

The Hindu pantheon has either an animal or bird prescribed as vehicle of a god Here we come across figures of bull, lion, elephant, buffalo, sheep and goat as vehicles from animals, swan, garuda, peacock and parrot from birds , and makara, tortoise and mouse from other creatures It is, however, disappointing to note that these figures have not been carved with the same skill and craftsmanship as is used in the case of human figures

In the remaining lot there is the famous grotesque figure of a griffin It is a ferocious looking animal pitched in a battle against

two human beings These two warriors symbolise human conscience and mind In the resistance offered to the monstrous power of the carnal desires a figure that attacks the griffin from below kneeling on the ground signifies human conscience, and that which attacks it by climbing on its back signifies human mind The latter is smaller in size and is seen being subdued by the animal Human mind is vulnerable to allurements and sensuous drives The other figure that of conscience, however, gives stiff resistence as it guards human beings from falling an easy prey to his own desires Numerous of these griffins decorate the walls of the temples and bear special significance in the erotic atmosphere that pervades here The othei variations of the griffin have elephant and parrot heads over the body of a lion

We have two colossal monolith statues of Varaha, the sacred boar incarnation of Lord Vishnu , and Nandi, the bull, vehicle of Lord Shiva These are two of the finest examples of animal sculpture of Khajuraho

(g) FRIEZES

The friezes of Khajuraho temples are significantly suggestive of some important aspects of social, religious and political conditions of the Chandella kingdom They prove to be of considerable importance for the construction of a general framework of the individual, moral and ethical standards of the people of the time These not only establish close cultural links with the period that preceded and also that followed it We can evaluate the norms of living and beliefs of the people of various fields These may, however, not be taken as authentic records but since art is the autobiography of culture and man we may write, by whatever art material available, the cultural history of the Chandellas The life that is recorded in the friezes of Khajuraho may help greatly in this work

These friezes are finely carved panels and look like the *payels* (anklets) tied at the ankles of a dancer and the figures in these like trinkets studded in them They not only serve the purpose of breaking the monotony of the huge blocks of stones but bring delicacy to the massive structures. They provide relief to the viewer whose sight would have travelled only upward had these panels not been put there horizontally Such friezes are also located on the inner walls at the collar of domes of the *mandapas*

The continuity of these friezes is broken by the latticed windows in case of those which are at about 8 feet from the platform and by niches in case of those which are at about 5 feet They illustrate

many interesting features that may give a lucid account of the contemporary life Broadly the subject of these friezes may be classified thus

(1) Social groups
(2) Fine arts
(3) Fun and past time
(4) Sexual orgy
(5) Wartime
(6) Religion

(1) *Social groups*

We come across men and women engaged in discharging different duties, and on the basis of these an outline of the social structure may be drawn The people here seem to be from three different classes according to their status lower, middle and upper-middle sections of the society In the lower section we find attendents, labourers and common folk , the middle section includes the militants, artists and urban folk , the upper-middle section includes the army officers, priests, and important and well-to-do persons

(2) *Fine arts*

The commonly practised fine arts are dance, music and sculpture Panels showing groups of dancers or musicians are examples of imaginative skill and the figures and compositions have been designed well There are some panels which show the artists working on slabs of stones The labourers moving away finished slabs and bringing in uncarved stones to them Some men and women seem to be visiting the site among whom a woman, apparently wife of the artist, carries lunch for him A panel shows an old master craftsman, bent with age, being respectfully led by attendents to the work-site for inspection

(3) *Fun and Past time*

People are seen amusing themselves by hunting, drinks and enjoying dance and music recitals Funs of most perverted nature are found in some of the panels which show men and women trying sexual apeasement from union with certain animals There are some very interesting scenes One of these shows a group of men preparing wine They are crushing some ingredients in a deep wooden pot Here also some very funny actions are exhibited that show the men as great perverts and devoted to sex In a panel depicting a drinking bowl in which three men, fairly drunk, force the fourth one to accept a bowl of wine, who is resisting by hiding his face between his two knees He is being pushed from the front by one man and the other drawing towards him by holding his two arms from behind

(4) *Sexual orgy*

It is as one would expect that these panels also exhibit men and women exploring the avenues of pleasure by their erotic frenzy These compositions are totally different from those prominently exhibited on the walls Here we find couples crouching on bed and inventing unusually picturesque postures that not only amuse their friends and attendants but also elate sense of humour and curiosity in the viewer Their frivolous, unwieldy and unthinkable attempts seeking sensual pleasure show an excess amount of love of fun in them They even do not hesitate in adopting unhealthy and unnatural means as of seeking sexual congress with animals The presence of attendants or associates during love-play is not at all embarrassing to them Moreover, these associates give a helping hand in making the love-play easier and reach the culmination The passionate boldness and silly approaches of the lovers provide ample amusement to them and they find themselves unable to hold their expression of shame and laughter At times they too give vent to their fun-loving brains to invent limitless means which provides them with untold pleasures

All these sports clearly indicate to the fact that sex relations were never considered as demoralising, and enough freedom was taken in this field The society must have, together with religion, found it difficult to check the popularity of Tantric way of life This probably led to the evalution of erotic literature and art, and spontaneously the whole country took great interest in pursuing the new way of life

(5) *Wartime*

Panels showing men of arms riding their horses and elephants are very much common It is in these panels that the artist has shown his powerful vision, observation and skill He deals with the subject in the manner of a commander who not only supervises the actions of the animals but also psychologically conducts the human beings to perform various deeds The dexterity, imagination and representation of too many aspects of the subject in a limited space and object has not scared him He includes most delicate moments of love with fun and the seriousness of war He makes the generals and the soldiers forget the dreariness of war in the filigree of women and wine He creates fun which amuse them He makes them laugh, dance and sing If on one hand he has created fear and panic of war and beasts he has on the other created most delicate scenes like farewell being accorded to a warrior by his family He shows mastery in creating atmospheres of high tension, concealed pathos, joy, love,

fun and panic all together He shows his warriors as fearless fighters embracing death with heroic valour, and he also exhibits them as passionate lovers, and gay and humorous folks All the figures breath with life, action and passion There are beautiful forms carved in picturesque harmony and balance

6 *Religion*

The gods in these friezes are Shiva and Ganesha Shiva is represented by the Lingam Some devotees are seen worshipping the Lingam placed amidst them There are ascetics and seers preaching men and women and teaching their disciples No sign of any other religion in these panels shows the popularity of Shaivism It is, however, necessary to point out that the ascetics have been shown vulnerable to women and wine It shows the effects of the Tantric rites that had widely influenced the life of the people in every walk of life

7 *Designs and decorative patterns*

The most neglected aspect of the sculptural embellishment happens to be that of designs and decorative panels which gives the massive stone structures delicate, beautiful and interesting appearance The flamboyant use of diaper in bold as well as linear styles and in compact masses or in fine carvings with interesting and pleasing variations creates a world of intricate filigree of forms in perfect harmony and rhythm of the architecture These are used most dextrously to break the monotony of the massive blocks of stones arranged pier over pier—horizontally and vertically There is an organised and scrupulous attempt not to make them much noticeable, conspicuous, and prominent It has also been tried to make them only a part of architecture as are the sculptures These designs though fused in the architectural transcendence not only delineate each part of the temples but accord them grace and splendour either individually or in masses

If there are traceries and diapers in every inch of the *shikharas* on one hand there are on the other space and rest provided in a calculated measure in the body and the plinth of the temples The parapets and cornices, the rounds and rectangles, and the vertical columns and *shikharas* all are formal patterns of design. The balconied windows and the niches, the sculptures and the bas-reliefs, and friezes enhance the beauty and charm of these great structures by their interesting forms, patterns and shapes The columns, the abacuses, the pedestals, the sills, the ceilings, the lintels, and the walls have been decorated

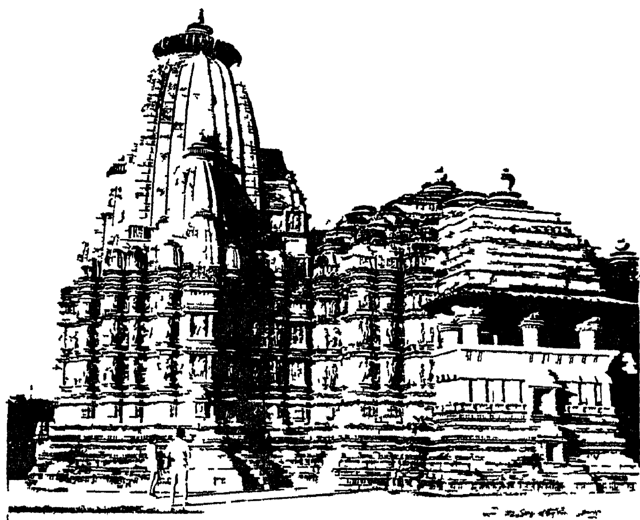
with flamboyant latticed ornamentation There are geometrical as well as freehand use of diapers that have the delicacy and beauty of the ivory carving The fretwork of the cupola and their volute ends are examples of master craftsmanship The latticed archways that hang from the lintel of the doorways are some of the outstanding examples of traceries in stone The jewelleries and the headgears of the figures are also treated with great ingenuity and skill

These form undisputedly most important parts which not only create spectacular charm and unending interest but give an added importance to the sculptures A common and extensively used form is that which covers the entire body of the *shikharas* of all the temples This is a simple pattern and has been used in various sizes in different places It can be taken to be a traditional and symbolical pattern of the Khajuraho school

The lotus patterns are used to decorate the pedestals of the images, the steps of the stairs, pillars, etc , apart from the friezes and numerous small panels that are imbibed into the body of the temples Many images of the gods have lotus attributes in one of their hands

Placed on the pinnacles of all the *shikharas*, large or small, are pitchers on which coconuts are mounted as is commonly done during ceremonies to symbolise the auspiciousness of the occasions

An unusual design is found on the pillars of the Ghantai temple in which chains and small bells floating and swinging to and fro make interesting patterns



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निकट निकट सरसी रचौ निकट निकट पर बाग। 28

3 पच्चासी मढ देव सव वाहन जुत त्रिपुरारि
विसुकर्म्मा को रचत ही लगी न घटिका चारि॥ 54

Chand Bardai, Mahoba Khand , 32, 28 & 54

4 देवा यक्षास्तथा नागा गन्धर्वाप्सरसोऽसुरा ।
क्रूरा सर्पा सुपर्णाश्च तरवो जिह्मगा खगा ।
विद्याधरा जलाधारा स्तथैवाकाशगामिन ।

J N Bannerjea, 'Development of Hindu Iconography', Ch IX, p 336

5 J N Bannerjea, ibid, Ch IX, p 336

6 गीतवीणाविधानैश्च गन्धर्वमिति कथ्यते।
चरणम् पशुसमानम् चोर्ध्वकायम् तु नराभम्॥
वदनम् गरुडभावम् बाहुकौ च पक्षयुक्तौ।
मुकुटम् कमलयुक्तम् पुष्पसच्छायम् वर्णम्॥
परित करुणवीणम् किन्नरस्य तु स्वरूपम्।

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7 वरदो भक्तलोकान्तम् किरीटो कुण्डलो गदी।
कायौस्स्वरूपी गन्धर्वो वीणावाद्यरतस्तथा॥

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4

Sensuous Element in Art

(a) The Evolution of Image



The Indian art of image making is marked with a gradual development of the beliefs and faiths of prehistoric and ancient people of the country who, induced by the inherent creative urge, found expression in drawings and carvings on stone

The primitive man was very much exposed to the hardships of the outer environment and the undefiable and hostile powers of nature and he sought for physical and moral support against his littleness, helplessness and ignorance, and he began to regard the powers of nature as gods The form of worship was most personal and the ritual consisted of prayer, offerings and sacrifices A close relation saturated with deep devoted submission of the self to the divinity created an atmosphere of spiritual unity of man with his god

The Indus Valley Civilisation (3rd millennium B C) seems to have existed at this stage Its mature and established

symbolic conceptions and miniature art forms, in a tradition of its own, are probably the earliest evidences of art of the prehistoric times

With the rise of the Aryans and their domination over this civilisation, a new religion evolved New gods and forms of worship were introduced, although the original religion of the land could not totally be changed or replaced and it very much remained alive

In the Vedic period the gods had not assumed the forms which we find in the literature of the later period—of the great Epics and Puranas

Existence of a Supreme entity, primal cause of everything along with many other gods was gradually established This supreme entity was believed to be the Creator of the world His powers were later divided in the forms of three different god-heads as Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the protector and Shiva, the destroyer Man sought physical and moral courage from Him He was his father and his mother There existed an intimate relation with man and his God , he believed the God was in him and he existed in the God

So far a visual object of worship had not been necessary, though, there was a feeling of failing concentration No deity seems to have been given visual form, although detailed descriptions of their visualised appearances and various symbols attributed to them are available in the scriptures of the period According to *Shilpa Shastra*, "The worship of images of stone, metal, jewels or clay leads the seeker of liberation to rebirth Hence, the man who wishes to renounce the world should worship only in his own heart and fear external forms of worship so that he may not have to live again "[1] Everyone can not effectively practise this form of worship and hence image worship for this catagory has been allowed "The Yogi perceives the Giver-of-Peace (i e , Shiva) in his own heart, not in images Images are meant to meet the need of the unrealised "[2] Madhvacharya also is of the opinion that because the unrealized have not the capacity of worshiping divinity in its true form, they should accept the help of images This is why images are necessary [3] Though in the Indian God worship, image worship is held as very low and the man's ultimate aim is to achieve liberation, image is accepted as an aid to higher realisation

Man needed a visible and concrete object of worship for a personal, spiritual and stable communication with his God for remaining in His constant protection, care and company This feeling is defined in the *Samarangana-Sutradhara* as the feeling in man of his not forgetting the fact that he was once in the company of the God [4]

"The idea behind the cult of images is to worship the invisible through the visible "[5]

It is "the devotion (bhakti) of the devotee that causes the manifestation of the image of the Blessed One" [6] This devotion is responsible for the evolution of worship of image, of various symbols and different rituals of worship Man developed intense faith and love in his god as an outcome of natural and simple inspiration, and this faith and love has been called devotion (*bhakti*) of which we find an earliest reference in *Shvetashvetar Upanishad* [7]

Although references mention of the worship of images of Gods, all the developments and genesis of the art of Vedic and post-Vedic periods remain in dark due to insufficient remains S K Saraswati calls this period as a big "hiatus", and S Kramrisch defines it as "void"[8] separating the prehistoric art of Indus Valley Civilisation from the earliest historical phase The reason for the absence of enough remains of art of this period of hiatus or void may be the use of perishable materials, such as wood, clay, ivory, etc , as is mentioned in the contemporary Vedic and post-Vedic literatures

The art of Indus Valley must have been preceded by art traditions of the prehistoric people, though the Indus Valley Civilisation has itself been considered as prehistoric due to its undeciphered script "The Harappa art may be said to have already established a conception of form, the fundamentals of which persist through the entire range of Indian sculpture The few stone sculptures of the Harappa Civilisation indicate no doubt, the existence of such a tradition in days long gone by"[9] and "image cult in India, so deeply rooted in our life, must have begun long before the days of Harappa where the images are already stylised" [10]

The themes and forms common in the Indus Vally, art are again visible in the art of the third century B C It is quite possible that the art and culture of the period intermingled with the Aryan culture and remained alive and active

Buddhism had already made a great impact on the society and it had the royal patronage of the Mauryas It was a "religion of masses"[11] unlike the individualistic character of Brahmanism The Buddhist art of this period and the subsequent period definitely is marked by the symbolic trend of earlier periods New symbols replaced the old, and stone came as a medium of expression The main examples of art of this period are the capitals of the Ashokan pillars and the significant and traditional Yaksha images

The sculpture of the post-Mauryan Shunga-Kanva period

presents a panorama of life within a religious atmosphere comprising all animate and inanimate objects A religious fervour along with the sensitiveness of human world surging forth in worshippers and devotees , innumerable human beings—both male and female—in different moods and postures, in spiritual sublimation as well as ecstacy of joy and sorrow , in awestricken wonder and terrible fear , in calm serene moods of devotion as well as in the turmoils of war have been remarkably presented There are urban and rural folks , kings and courtiers , queens and courtesans , dancers and attendants , warriors, riders on elephant and horsebacks , animals, birds, griffins, flowers, creepers, water and various symbols like "the wisdom-tree, the-wheel, feet, trishula and lotus"[12] representing the Buddha, the well-known Yakshas and Yakshis , Nagas and Nagis , spirits of trees, all worked out in minute details, with great skill and intimate sympathetic approach The atmosphere is saturated with the divine presence, though there are only symbols representing the Buddha Everything seems to be in perfect harmony to sing in unison and profound devotion, the greatness of the Lord, and have but one goal that of achieving the 'Nirvana'

The mastery with which stone was used for sculpture proves that the art was practised in the earlier period of hiatus Buddhist art, utilising the symbols, old and new, with full advantage supported by sculptural qualities of its own, had achieved its purpose of representing the life of the divine Buddha in legends, and symbols of this mundane world apparant in the sensuous modelling and expressions of the figures—full of excitement, vigour and life

A most significant development in art took place in the Kushan period when at Mathura and Gandhara, the human figure of Buddha was first sculptured in stone Buddha images from Mathura satisfy the Vedic descriptions of images of deities, whereas those from Gandhara are Prototypes of the Graeco-Roman gods and did not come up to "Indian standards and Indian minds" [13]

It was in the fourth century under the mighty Guptas that images of Hindu gods, and of Buddha and Tirthankaras were made in significant classical style, with perfect synchronisation of vision with form , art with culture , and that of human with divine principles The art reached the height of perfection with marked consciousness and aspirations of the intellectuals transcending all human limitations

The image of god, conceived in terms of human form appeared as if charged with the divineness of the outerworld, not only represented a particular deity but was considered as the God incarnate

The image acted as a medium between the worshipper and the god It could hold the worshipper in a state of trance, complete submission and pious devotion As an ideal object of worship it is the deity personified in most disciplined expression of goodness, beauty and super-human qualities of transcendent divineness It leads the worshipper to spiritual transcendence beyond the mysteries of the mundane world above all the joys and sorrows and permeates in him eternal happiness, exaltation and divine peace

Without visual and concrete form the realisation of a deity would have not been lasting Moreover, it is the deity itself that comes to permanent existence through an image According to a *Yajurveda* passage, the existence of two forms of each God is clear, one the concrete and finite, and the other the abstract and infinite, "with your own, i e , real, body enter this concrete body" [14] *Brahmavaivarta Purana* says that, "The Murti (image) itself is the wife of Dharma, which is the order of things in the cosmos and righteousness in man Without the image, the supreme spirit (Paramatman), whose abode is the whole universe, would be without support" [15] *Shukranitisara* mentions that, " The image maker should fashion images in such a manner that they would conduce to the success of the dhyana-yoga" [16]

Thus we see an excitingly interesting development of man's imagination taking concrete shape of images of gods in the quest of truth, in the realisation of his destiny and in determining the purpose of life The littleness, helplessness and failing courage of man did not come in his way of developing spiritual consciousness and he found that he can survive by living in a state of desirelessness, detached from the worldly joys and sorrows, and following the right path of attaining the release (*moksha*) and the company of God

The art of sculpture in the 8th to 12th century A D reached its culmination when the artist tried his skill on various subjects besides proper images of the divinities Though the sculpture was conceived as a part of the architecture yet they are important by themselves The Khajuraho sculptures of this period very much represent the contemporary trend There are various gods and goddesses, apsaras, surasundaris, nayikas and animals amatory figures conceived in architectural unity The images of the principal deities have the same sensuous treatment as is seen in other figures on the temple shrines

(b) Sensuous Charm

For sculpture the concept of beauty is not only embodied in the form and shape but also in the physiognomy, rhythm and expression

Beauty of a figure is revealed by frank and unhesitating presentation of the charm of the body The artist having deep knowledge, understanding and inner vision gives expression and vigour to the figure

Religion, myths and legends provided a vast background for the artist to present various truths of human life The conception of supra-human qualities play permanent, meaningful and effective role in transcending the purpose of art and find for it unique vision and quality over and above the sensuous physiognomy, sincere and powerful expression of human sentiments and life

The Indian artist visualised and portrayed sympathetically the various moods and feeling of man The human figure created by him sometimes attained the exalted appearance and seemed to belong to a transmundane world, its expression most true and human, its beautiful figure reflecting supernatural quality of the inner-self Even the image of god has been sculpted with the same human charm fused with supra-human beauty and charm We find in *Vishnu Purana* the Brahman to possess all the signs of an ideal human character [17] In *Manasara*, the Buddha is described to have long arms, beautiful chest, fleshy and fully proportionate body [18] The *Vishvakarmashastram* characterises the image of Lakshminarayan with well-shaped eyes and forehead and youthful beauty [19]

The artist sculpted delicate and perfect male and female figures with all his love, sincerity and truthfulness, and produced the vitality and romance of humanbeing in self-revealing, lustrous and at the same time well-built figures Thus an understanding between vision and expression, knowledge and truth, lust and beauty was established Kalidas with a deep understanding of the nature of the beauty describes the truth of beauty of Parvati and says that the external appearance is not the only quality of beauty The beauty of the inner soul is the natural source of beauty [20] Sri Madrupa Swami says that if the human body has proper forms and right proportion of limbs and finely-built body and its joints,[21] such body needs no ornamentation as it would appear ornamented on its merits [22]

Indian art has always derived its basic needs and outlook from nature Human body forms were conceived in most striking similarity to natural phenomena, i e , tree trunk, leaves, flowers, fruits, parrot, khanjana bird, deer, bull, lion, etc In *Brihat Samhita*, Vishnu is described to possess body colour resembling to 'Atasi' flower, he wears a yellow scarf and bears a smilling look on his countenance [23] *Samrangana Sutradhar* prescribes for the image of 'Shri' a face

resembling full moon, white body colour, lips like 'bimba' fruit and beautiful smile[24]

Aparajitaprichha says that it is a pleasure to behold such a maiden whose face resembles the full moon and the body has the charm of the morning sun, the eyes large and the lips like 'bimba' fruit One who walks like a swan and has a medium body form lives happily in this world, thus mentions the science of astrology[25] The Panchalaliyahs are mentioned to have fine eyes, beautiful to look at they have blood-red lips and shoulders like 'Kambu'[26]

The female body was conceived in the terms of tenderness, loveliness and beauty and the figures were given shapes and forms which gave them the delicate appearance, feminine grace and creeper-like twist almost in their normal actions The sensuousness of the figures symbolised the loveliness and delicacy of the flesh and possessed the finest expressions and moods of human love and sentiments so as to reflect the union of the soul with the divine Kalidas has ably revealed the relation of matter with person by presenting Surya and Arvind to create beauty of Parvati in *Kumarsambhava* "Her body fully unfolded (developed) by fresh youth, appeared charming in its perfect symmetry, like a painting gradually grown under the brush (of a painter), or like a lotus blooming under (the influence of the) rays of the sun"[27]

The human delight and love was seen in the perspective of the union of the Purusha and Prakriti, man and his female principle, Atman and Paramatman and as in the most sensuous sculptures this aspect was always present It is, therefore, that beautiful and sensuous figures could be made

There is a gradual development in the effort of showing delicacy and softness of flesh Sensuousness in art increased even the sexual sport was depicted most sincerely Increase in the sensuous character in art found its culmination in the presentation of sexual delights and sports of love, though a veil of religious sanctity and transcendental vision was always present there

The origin of the sensuous character in sculpture appears to have come with the origin of the art itself However, the earliest example of sensuous beauty is seen in the figures of the Yakshas and Yakshis of Sanchi and Bharhut The Bodh Gaya, Didarganj and Patna Yaksha figures indicate further improvement and possess sensuous charm of the living body

The next development comes with the advent of the Shunga-Kanva period when human figures were carved with a realistic feeling

of fresh and to express the human beauty, sentiments and sport as is evident in the Yaksha and Yakshis of this period

In the Shaka-Kushana-Andhra period, the figures became more delicate and sensuous In fine reliefs at Amaravati, the female figures have the most agile and supple body, youthful glory, life and passion , they are charming, exciting and joyful and breathe with life and action S K Saraswati appreciatingly describes that, "The smooth and resilient flesh, seemingly pleasurable to the touch, lends a sensuous effect to the delicate and alluring female forms with their full busts, heavy hips coquettish countenances and almost serpentine suppleness the sensuousness of Amaravati seems to be more refind and more restrained it is the innocent delight and joyous freshness the love of life and the joy of existence - The wildest transports of joy alternating with outbursts of violent passion Everything is dramatic, mobile and agitated"[28] In these figures there is " the joy of life Frankly sensuous, almost bursting with dynamism, their gait is rhythmic , their bodies away in grace They are coquettish , ecstatic joy and wild passion have taken possession of them There is very little other worldiness in these sculptures"[29] The Yakshis of Mathura, possess "a flamboyance and sensuality of expression surpassing anything known in the art of earlier periods"[30]

This attempt of the artist, of giving more alluring and charming appearance to his sculpture only aims at producing more sensuous and erotic female forms All the tenderness, loveliness and beauty of the female figure were given shape and form to express movement, grace and loveliness, tenderness and also human delight bedecked with love and beauty, compassion and benignity

In the Gupta period, mostly the transcendental beings, gods and goddesses were sculpted with perfect craftsmanship, vision and knowledge , deep insight and restraint , sincerity and realisation of the supra-human qualities Besides the ideal and perfect human standards there reflects the transcendental spirit through the sensitive and lively human forms—a perfect blending of human and eternal principles into charming otherworldly expression As a result deities become incarnate in sculpture possessing sensuous charm of the human body with all superfluities, like drapery reduced to the minimum

The art of the post-Gupta period in the 8th to 13th century A D is remarkably sensuous in appearance as well as in purpose The artist with his superb skill and intelligence portrayed sensual delight of the human world which ultimately finds its climax in the mithuna

figures, as such the supra-human transcendence of cosmic beauty, charm and elegance is absent from these glamorously exciting, beautiful worldly figures So much so that the artist seems to lack inner vision The human figure conceived in sculpture to represent the divinity thus not only fulfils the requisite ideals of man but also transforms, human beauty and expression so as to create a feeling of intimate relationship and identity with the divine "Man ultimately finds himself divinised in the sweet and gladsome, sensuous—super sensuous sculpture The medieval sculpture in India annihilates his material to express the final aspiration of the human spirit his own apotheosis "[31]

The art of sculpture was very much influenced and directed by factors like imagination, expression canonical conventions, literature, and mystical approaches of man which guided and fashioned the entire range of sculpture followed the guiding principles but crossed the limit on its own potentiality and merit—sometimes even unconventionally The sensuous charm like surging tide engulfed all the arts, and if the art of sculpture made its own contribution it was but natural and synchronous development in that direction

The sensuous quality in the figures of Khajuraho temples is not only fully developed but also greatly refined. The human passion and delight, various moods and gestures, body forms and movements have been carved with great care The human love-play is significantly portrayed in an ingenuous sincerity with a result that the figures have acquired most sensuous character besides, possessing the exquisite expressions of love, attachment, submission, desire and passion Although much liberty has been taken by inventing unusual and unimaginable postures yet everything has been dealt with unhesitating, convincing and sincere attitude

In the sensuous charm of figures replete with passion and in the perfect insight of the artist of human psyche reflects the eternal union of the Purusha and Prakriti—Being and the Becoming The delicate, passion arousing and lively female figures , the dynamic, magnificient and assuring male figures in befitting expressions, caress, embrace, holding and kissin geach other with profound love parallels of which are rare in the Indian plastic art

(c) Human Sentiments

Man's attempt to express his feelings and sentiments by means of visual forms and objects, colours and lines, sounds and languages can be traced to the primitive man With the developments in his

creative faculties, knowledge and understanding there came a gradual refinement in the modes of expression too

The artist in his endeavour of expressing his inner-self and visualising the common man's feelings finds transcendental cosmic plane and acquires universal outlook Then he carves, paints, speaks, writes and sings in the immortal transmundane character When he deals with human emotions and expressions his art becomes universal—cosmic and immortal

He carves out his feelings of love and hate, joy and sorrow, beliefs and disbeliefs, war and peace, and life and death in artistic expositions

The works of art are the outcome of man's visions, emotions, and spiritual ideals all of which create universal expressions

Vision of the world is the raw material for his artwork, visions make his heart throb with passion and provoke him to give shape and form, colour and language to his experience This creative urge of man resembles the creative interest of the God The artist creates with the same vigour and potentiality—the raw material scattered around him—he needs only the proper atmosphere and inspiration Narada says that, "whatever is found in the Dhyana (mantra) should be made"[32] Abhinavagupta in the course of his presentation of the essential nature of the aesthetic experience, says that "it is nothing but the basic mental state (*sthayin*) which figures in the consciousness, which is free from all impediments"[33] Hemchandra says that "Ananda arises immediately from the experience of *rasa* and this experience is like that of bliss attendant upon the realisation of Brahman"[34] According to *Samarangara Sutradhara*, the expressions on the face reveal the inner-self likewise in painting the expression of sentiments is executed The main sentiments are Shringara, Hasya, Karuna, Raudra, Bhayanaka, Vira, Vibhatsa, Adbhuta and Shanta which the experts use to achieve a desired effect [35] So in *Vishnudharmottara* also the above *rasas* have been mentioned as the nine rasas for painting [36]

Man's cultural, social and personal achievements and developments are portrayed in his art—and also his intellect, his belief, faith and exposition of knowledge , the elevation of his thoughts, feelings and actions , his aspirations, attainments and glory , and his personal, social and universal impulses, ideals and advancements In the works of art are reflected the systematic development of various stages of man's vision The artist is inspired by the nature around him—he borrows his ideas from real life and transforms them into visual objects However, an emotional, sensitive and receptive mind is a

prerequisite of creation of art work The artist reveals the truth of his own self, his inherent desires and aspirations He gives language to his mute spirit which is saturated with the love of this world, and seeks expression The artist formulates his emotions into various expressions and pulls himself out of the chaos of his losing identity, existence as well as significance

The peaceful and equally restive soul's goodness and sensitiveness, and transcendent feelings which symbolise the warmth of love, passion —desire and action of man provide a fertile ground for the expressions of man's worldly dealings on human or transcendental plane These expressions become universal when there establishes harmony between sentiments and associations, and when common man's feelings are associated with the masses

The vigour and life that pulsate in his work come from the life itself portraying the forces of mind and nature While the common sentiments of man such as love, hate, fear, anger, etc., are befittingly human the expressions of beauty, meditation, calm and ideals transcend above the wrath of time and history The visual qualities of forms, shapes and composition create a sense of beauty in harmony with the objectives of the subject matter, which in the process becomes "the expression of any ideal which the artist can realise in plastic form", since "the purpose of art is the communication of feeling" and "beauty is the feeling communicated by particular forms"[37]

The artist of India gradually was able to portray the feelings and expressions in his work as he was a man of this world equally like others, he too was affected by environment and his works, therefore bore the characteristics of the time R K Mukherjee points out that "art not only reveals man's intense emotional relations to the world but also supplies the formal symbol, pattern or design for various activities that bind him to fellowman"[38]. Herbert Read says that "Art is a tribute to man's own humanity"[39] and that, "what we really expect in a work of art is a certain personal element"

Examining the earliest human figures, those of Yakshas and Yakshis, we find the symbolic representation of probably some natural spirits in sexually erotic poses Their expressions are rigid in the masses of stone and have no flexibility and, hence, are most unimpressive What the Yakshas and Yakshis in Buddhist art have acquired are meaningful smile, shining and bright eyes which denote either the fulfilment of their desires or the excitement of the proposed meeting of the other partner

The artist was forced to adopt various symbols in the early stage, for giving meaningful expressions to individual figures No doubt the symbols remain even when the art is developed and comparatively mature

Much more refined forms of human figures are found in the carvings of Amaravati, where the individual figures possess well-executed human expressions There is poetry in stone , a world of ecstacies of joy and sorrow, calm and fear, passionate devotion and love so clearly manifested in the physiognomy that the surrounding atmosphere receds to the background and the figures become prominent and dynamic The dramatic exaggeration of not only expressions but also of body forms create a moving picture of life with all its complexities The delicate and supple bodies most befittingly live with the expressions attributed to them and the figures act accordingly and evoke the same feelings in the onlooker to make him feel a part of the composition The exhuberent wave-like joy, the tense and serious atmosphere of mourning, the fright and flight for fear of life, the heavenly peace and calm of devotional worship—everything most sincerely and artistically portrayed proves the ability of the artist

The images of the gods and deities of the subsequent periods bear the tranquil, impassionate and Yogic expression which elevates them from the mundane world They appear to be looking within, there is depth in their vision, the smile is charmingly divine—the body form adding to the supra-human expression We find a mention in *Vishnudharmottara* that says—the image of the Brahma should possess all the ideal qualities of man and which would look like the incarnation of contentment-repose-calmness-tranquillity in an unattached form of meditation [40]

In Ajanta paintings we find besides Buddha this worldly atmosphere of love and hate, war and peace and devoted submission and beauteous charm, courtly grandeur and the austerity of the devotee, the colourful joyous dancers and musicians and the boisterously happy and gay humans Their expressions revealing their innermost feelings The figures rightly justify the emotions in their body forms and actions The expressions of the figures are common to sculpture and painting, and that in both the importance of the nine sentiments is to be identical The images can be prepared out of gold, silver, copper, stone, wood and iron [41]

Thus the human expressions have been given a meaningful and symbolic representation with confidentally executed features in equally well-defined artistic body forms which denote not only human but

supra-human abstract aspect of mind and soul also with crystal-clear understanding, deep knowledge and reflected vision The artist has not only successfully painted the luxuries of life but also the transcendent expressions which denote the search and attainment of the ultimate goal of life—the tranquillity of the soul, calm, serene and detached look of the body and mind depicted in the symbolically expressive figures

The figure of the compassionate Buddha rises above human level and all the worldliness Here all the human expressions attain divineness of the gods, the passionate human love transforms to the sanctimonious benevolence of the supra-human powers, the happiness of this world acquires the beautific charm of the other world Rowland has described this as "beauty beyond reality"

The imperfect human emotions which become an easy prey of the powerful army of 'Mara' achieve the detached glory and the placid victorious smile and the gentle transcendence of a powerful spirit above all imperfections

The Buddha is the Ultimate Reality 'Moksha'—'Nirvana' personified He appears to have risen beyond human limits Abstracted from the worldly attachments to the divine state of desirelessness and peace

The sculpture of later and the last phase of Indian art throughout the country is purely this-worldly and is passionately charming, and has most sensuous beautiful human forms The body forms sometimes outwit the expressions—the expressions are so natural and true, so perfect and appropriate that the fusion of physical and spiritual values suddenly attains a transcendental state where these figures differ from common man There flows a perennial cosmic stream advancing towards the eternal sea of the other-world The sensuous female figures present a panorama of delicate, sensitive and youthful humans amidst the serene, well-poised and gracious deities The human emotions of lust and appeasement and the divine expressions of thoughtful gravity and unattached charming smile are visible in a marked contrast In some of the amatory groups a compassionate male is holding the female so as to help her realise the futility of the carnal emotions of the humans and know the true path in devoted worship of the Supreme Power with a complete fusion of self with the eternal principles This transcendent emotion is perfectly imbibed in the countenance of the male figure who is in a harmonical companionship of his female partner

The sculpture of Khajuraho reflect the true realisation of the artist of his subject and the coordination of his feelings to which he wished to give shape and form There is a sharp variation in expressions of figures The figures seem to be engaged in acts of serious business. Even when most insignificant purpose of looking in mirror of a lady is shown whom we find either admiring her own beauty or probably visualising her lover in her own reflection therein A lady, who with her left foot lifted in an upward bend and her right hand holding it, is extricating a thorn with the left hand gives the expression of pain which is evident from the twist of the eye-brows, lips and eyes

There is, however, an overwhelming, quiet and peace reigning over the multitudinous males and females—deities and semi-gods who flank each other in actions contrary to the pious atmosphere and purpose The transcendental unattached serenity and the expressions of love and caress befittingly human both in reverie of the Supreme Power so much different from each other yet spiritually united preplex the beholder The artist here has reached a new high in expressing the sentiments, delicate as well as difficult, fully justifying the canonical strictures and ably depicting mainly the Shanta and Shringar *rasas* Speaking of Shringara Anandvardhana says that "The erotic, indeed is the sweetest and the most delectable of all sentiments"[42]

The male and female figures in a mithuna act bear two separate emotions The male is passively but firmly holding the female in an embrace whereas the female is passionately embracing him The male is admiringly supporting the female and the reassured female hangs on him in a posture of total submission The eyes of the male are fixed on the youthful countenance of his partner as if fathoming the deep ocean of love therein The passion in him is being gradually roused with the propinquity of the warm and tender flesh of the female The eyes of the female looking upward to the male are laden with the emotion that has already taken possession of her In the height of the excitement she submits herself fully Gradually the couple engages itself in the love-play kissing and embracing each other

The Indian sculptor, reaching the height of his skill with expressions idealised, universalised and abstracted, creates the most beautiful human figures ever conceived Here is the climax of the art of sculpture and the culmination of the artist's vision, skill and knowledge

(d) Art and Social Life

The primitive man must have discovered by experience that the collective living was a necessity for him He must have found that he

could not separate himself from the obligations of the society and that he lived his life for others

To express pleasure and pain, love and hatred, happiness and sorrow man created objects which could reveal his inner-self effectively, fully and permanently The creative faculty of man, a result of his tender, sensitive and imaginative qualities acting from within, and influenced by environment, circumstance and need of man or society took visual forms without

The whole background and value of art creation is deep rooted in the human society finding expression through an individual's perception, vision and universal approach The aesthetic and moral forces bind man with society in mutual but compulsory bonds, these are the basic needs of the organised human life

The creative faculties in man develop sense of cooperation and dedication and submission of self in mass, making life possible Thus the human existence finds meaning—the purpose of life is glorified

An individual is obliged to behave in a sanctioned manner of a society to which he belongs Although he is free to have his own dogmas, social control over every of his action is inevitable The harmony in expression and activity is based upon the mutual and reciprocal understanding and cooperation of the individual and society There goes on a battle for supremacy between individual and society in which the former always loses It is exceptional that the society is influenced, guided and changed by a powerful person of outstanding merits

Human sentiments have for them a social background where they nurture in them the spirit and ideal of mass welfare and universal good Anything which appeals all makes direct impact on the heart and its effect lasts long

Art is no doubt the result of man's individual activity, but as in the root of all art is necessarily the human society the credit of all the achievements of man is claimed by the society , and the individual—the artist—loses his identity in the mass Thus the interests of the society supremely figure in an individual's life As art reflects the social pattern of a particular race and country, we find in it glimpses of systematic growth of culture, religion, individual achievements and spiritual advances of man, his approaches to ideals, understanding of life and humanitarian consciousness Art serves as a bridge of human understanding, it shows the right path, sows the seeds of future life and acts as a saviour of mankind It prescribes and administers

universal ideals and culture and creates stable expressions of beauty, moral and behaviour in man

For an individual art may be purely an escape from chaos and frustration, but it is an autobiography of mankind It reflects the social pattern of a particular race and country, systematic growth of culture, religion, individual achievements and spiritual advances of man It is an intermediary force between the past and the present and between the present and the future generations Art embodies in it human values, thoughts and beliefs, customs and manners and emotions and sentiments of the age It carries representational values of universal character and eternal elements of mankind It conveys the most established and refind expressions of life

The purpose of art is supposed to please the human senses, but it also relieves him of the tension, confusion and chaos of life, and inspires in him strength and vigour, to face the cruelties of life The tranquility and beauty of certain artwork not only make man forget himself but elevate him from the momentary mortal plane to the heights of enchanting eternal other-worldly plane

The works of art reflect man's inner-self, the world around him, and perfect values of human life The society very much depends on the genius and sensible thoughts of the artist which guide man of subsequent periods Men of genius and intellect sometimes reform and reframe codes and norms of life This harmonious correlation between art and society saves, revives and gives a new lease of life to the social structure, beliefs, faiths and decaying and collapsing ideals of mankind

The artist visualises ideals and standards of beauty, establishes harmony between his inner-self and the outer-world and implants aesthetic sense in the society The artist who hunts for ideals in life and not only follows the established principles also evolves and sets new ideals in conformation to his conscience and the society and above all the universal principles that guide the common man for better life and society

The ultimate aim of life is the quest of eternal truth and there can be no denial of the social factor of co-existence Every true art in every age has but one ideal, purpose and function—transforming the human or the worldly sentiments to aspire for great, true and ultimate aim of life Art has a penetrating and influencing quality which makes its impact on mind, heart and actions of man, and this is why man seeks spiritual solace and guidance from the artistic creations When the necessities of man forced him to take up cons-

truction of dwellings, utencils, etc , wood was the popular medium Gradually brick and then stone replaced wood for architecture and sculpture work

The sages and experts have, in many important literary works like *Vishnudharmottara*, *Abhilashitartha Chintamani*, *Manasara*, *Shilparatna*, *Samaragnana Sutradhara*, etc , given elaborate descriptions pertaining to the arts of music, dance, painting, sculpture, architecture and various other arts Canonical strictures were prescribed for the pursuance of all these arts

The progress and practice of art indicate the cultural and social achievements of the country The cultural advances and developments , the styles and thoughts , and visions and impressions reflected in the works give authentic proofs of the aesthetical, moral and religious understandings and the humanitarian attitudes of the people of the period

At no stage the ideals of serving the people was overlooked The artist, fully aware of the potentialities of his art, employed all his energy, skill and imagination to evolve new symbols and forms acceptable to the society The messages and objects of art were recognised due to their eternal qualities

The art in its multifarious forms assimilated the various traditional, religious and social symbols The people accepted the art forms to supplement their need of visual objects of worship and in various religious and social activities

Religion dominated life, with the result that all the activities of man required religious sanction besides social approval One or the other rituals found place in every-day life of man The temples played an important role in social life, and subject to man's recognition of super-human powers the religious domination over man and society gained ground

The Buddhist art in India illustrates vividly the contemporary social life through the Jatak illustrations People of different social groups have been shown in suitable atmosphere, their expressions befitting their actions Kings, courtiers, army men, civilians, men, women, children all engaged in various activities like fighting, dancing, worshipping, crying, laughing, running, etc The works at Bharhut, Sanchi and Amaravati are the testimony of men, of the religious and social orders of the day

In the works of later periods we find individual figures depicting most human expressions as well as divine expressions Different beliefs and religious doctrines which greatly influenced art are clearly

indicative of the pursuit of a particular purpose in this art

The Buddhist art of the earlier phase and the Brahmanical art of the later phase strictly produced works which not only spiritually guided man but improved his social outlook The art of the medieval period, in which the most sensuous and erotic works in literature and visual arts were created, necessarily depicts the social and religious conditions of the time

The socio-religious tolerance to the perverted and extremist tendencies of the medieval period is exhibited in the erotic and most sensuous expressions in art

Many great civilisations of the past, in all parts of the world, became extinct because of their pursuit of pleasures, their adapting of easy ways of life, their indulgence in glamour and vanity, their sexual enjoyments, etc Ivar Lissner has expressed beautifully that " in the prime of every civilization lie the seeds of its death"[43] So also Ozenfant says that "Men, like civilisations, enter decadence, not when they have lost but GAINED their ideal"[44]

At Khajuraho, as elsewhere too, the *mithuna* theme is carved with an inimitable excellence and in the light of the foregoing discourse it is probably the decadence in the social milieu and ethics of the time that allowed such expressions in art No doubt, contemporary religious doctrines, which preached an easiest method of attaining salvation through physical and spiritual appeasement—the Bhoga and Yoga theory, evoked the minds of the people to follow this Vamamarga

The creator falls prey to his own prowess The art of man is the dream of man realised through his own hands It constitutes the essense of human ideals, truths and faiths , it relinquishes the shelter of its progenitor and adorns the eternal expressions and ideals in the universal interest and good, beyond individualism Because, according to Herbert Read, "The ultimate values of art transcend the individual and the time and circumstance"[45] It is very difficult, therefore, to justify these attempts of people of the period who ignored aesthetic and ethical limits strictly observed till then with sanctimonious rigidity, pious attitude and reverence The artist can not be blamed for any ethical and aesthetical lapses, as while discussing social conditions and interrelations of society and art of a period we cannot, at any cost, overlook the moral, ethical and aesthetical conditions prevailing in that period besides considering the religious conditions But to reach at the social stratum of the period after the golden age of the Guptas we must, however, examine the political condition of the

country We find a grave split up of the great Gupta empire into numerous small States, the rulers of each of which either in alliance with the neighbouring rulers or on their own declared sovereign autonomy and were safeguarding their interests by military alliance with the rulers of other smaller states who accepted the former as their over-lords Thus the whole of the country was a vast battlefield of vested interests bringing the political life to the brink of uncertainty and bloody conflicts The defeat or victory of the ruler or change of over-lordship, or allegiance did not matter much to the peace-loving subjects who remained busy in their day-to-day life

This situation is reflected in the literary and artistic creations of the period in almost every quarter of the country The unchallanged peace and stability of the society even in the days of turmoils of incessant wars and changing political conditions shows the strength of the social organisations, and may very well account for the happy and prosperous conditions of the people in the society

Now taking the religious conditions of the country into account, we find a great harmony and tolerance existing among the followers of different faiths Brahmanism was on the fore, Buddhism was on the decline, and Jainism had shrunk to limited areas in the country Tantricism was growing popular by advocating simplified and attractive doctrine It offered revolutionary and easy ways to the people to achieve the goal of their life—salvation The Tantric rituals included esoteric rituals which poisioned the minds of the people and there appeared serious deterioration in the moral and ethical standards The art of this period, particularly speaking the sculpture that adorned the walls of the temples indicates the popularity of Tantric philosophy We find in it, if not the clear picture of social order of the day, an indirect indication of the moral and aesthetical standards of the people In the sculptures of Khajuraho and elsewhere in India there are many illustrations of men and women, of art field, disciples in discourse with their teachers, of armies marching in battle array and in various other activities and also erotic scenes depicting sexual orgies perhaps due to the influence of the Tantric philosophy

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(स्त्रीपुरुषलक्षणम्)

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5

Religion and Art

(a) Vision of Art



A real art work embodies in it the traditions, achievements and developments of the people of its time It speaks of common feelings, visions, and social and universal ideals of man Art truely reflects human mind and significantly portrays the social, religious, moral as well as personal values and establishes spiritual rapport between the people of two different ages It governs the aspirations, urges and needs of man besides being the principal factor of moulding them all to aesthetical, ethical and moral ideals It applies no force but effectively influences man whose natural inclination goes out in search of a peaceful and enduring shelter through which emanates echo of the blessings of his ancestors

"The real function of art is to express feeling and transmit understanding"[1] And it is not until man gives shape to his feelings that a work of art is created A

work of art, therefore, is an attempt of an artist to know what his feelings are like "Until a man has expressed his emotion, he does not yet know what emotion it is "[2]

Art represents certain period and it invokes new vigour and strength and arouses new hopes and life in the people of future It blows in man new breath and strength It infuses in him harmony and system required for the dispelling of confusion, conflict and discontent It provides him solace, repose and joy by transmitting and implanting well-defind values of life in the soul of mankind It saves him from indetermination, uncertainty and confusion It functions in more indirect way and thus eliminates the question of presenting any solution of problems

Art springs forth from the imagination of man Art symbolises human understanding, vision and belief that prevail around man It represents the ideals that govern the life of man and goes a long way to influence man in times to come It embodies in its shell the principles that irrespective of time, place and race guide mankind Art is the expression of man's sentiments spoken through symbols These symbols help to cultivate in man the human understanding which is inculcated in them and also bind man with strong cultural bonds to the people of the past

Man is judged in crisis and struggle for survival, strength and his zeal to ascertain his existence come in conflict with the destructive forces that the best and ideal in him emerges for the benefit of mankind He engages himself in creative expression so as to maintain the balance between the contrasting forces of life and death, and between momentary and eternal truths R K Mukherjee rightly examines that, "It is often the poignant crisis of man's life brought about by war, carnage, sensualism and moral chaos that have elicited the worlds' supreme artistic expressions"[3]

Art sets a pattern and an ideal for life giving it new values and thus lays the foundation of culture on which is raised the superstructure of future generation It expresses the harmonious activities of man in full conformity with social and religious institutions These harmonious adjustments are achieved only when there establishes a deep understanding between individual and society

Art translates the mute human understandings and visions into visible forms and invokes in man the desire to find the message it conveys The process reveals the hidden truth and ideals on one hand, and on the other initiates a turbulent stream of inquisitive desires in the spirit of man to find new vistas Art has a purpose, ideal and

utility so much so that, "there cannot be imagined an art without meaning or use"[4]

Religion has been the most powerful and important factor not only giving birth to most of the art but sometimes dominating the whole range of classical art in almost all countries as in India

Indian art had a very humble but powerful beginning under the royal patronage of Ashoka who as a great Buddhist implied various symbols to proclaim the religious doctrine of Buddhism

The aecumenical sympathy and love advocated and nourished by the royal proclamations and art found a place of importance in the sculptural compositions, illustrating the Jataka stories in the Buddhist art of Bharhut, Sanchi and Amaravati Indian art successfully portrayed all the human moods through the forms and symbols, movements and compositions, and contours and modelling We find a deep correlation in human forms and nature in the art of this period

The art now, however, acted as the carrier of the religious doctrines of Buddhism, it also expressed the human aspirations of finding transcendental peace and showed the path to the liberation of human soul through rightful means It depicts the turmoils of eventful life of man in which there is suffering and conflict, there is sorrow and pain, and there is the flight of the mind plagued with the desires of all worldly pleasures and carnal longings Then there is the exhausted and desperate human mass thronging in humble submission at the feet of the great Saviour As turbulent, surging mighty billows crossing all barriers, drowning and uprooting whatever came in way , breaking in thousands of ripplets—gasping for breath clotching the shore of tranquility—at last bowing their proud and powerful heads moaning and wilowing in remorse

Later in the Kushana period when the image came to replace the earlier symbolic representations of Buddha we find a gradual influx of knowledge, compassion and transcendent vision in the physiognomy of the Master Finally, it was in the Gupta period when images of Buddha as well as the Hindu deities were made in strict pursuance of the canons of sculpture laid down that the supra-human and the other-worldly expression emerged prominently along with refined craftsmanship and deep imagination of the artist

Since the purpose of image worship was to hold the attention of the worshipper onto the manifestation of a particular deity in a particular form it was for the artist to see that the image he was making fulfilled the needs of man He imagined most charming and majestic

human forms to represent and symbolise a particular divinity in an image Because the artist remained alive to the fact that he was making an image which would be the god as aspired and needed by man

The art of the later Gupta period is significant for the variety of subjects that made their way into it This was mostly subject to the evolution of temple architecture of which the sculpture formed a part of decorative embellishment, except for the principal deity installed in sanctum The body of the temple was considered as a celestial abode of all supernatural elements, semi-gods, gods and goddesses and as such the incorporation of all these in the body of the temple in a very much planned way gave the artist ample opportunity to show his imagination and skill

There are joyous semi-gods dancing to the tunes of a variety of instruments , flying to spread the fragrance of glory of the god in all directions , chanting sweet hymns in worshipful praise amidst the charming apsaras and sura-sundaris who in their fascinating make up and with sensuous body forms are preparing for the devotional dance in the divine court , and there are the families of gods in all there majestic gravity and transcendental charm guarding and attending there Over-Lord This great assemblage of the divinities inspired and led man to realise that god was omipresent and almighty

We witness in this period a great competition in art activity of two great religions viz , Buddhism and Brahmanism It never occurs in case of Brahmanical or Buddhist art that any one of these may have lost in any way the dynamism and vitality it had exhibited so far, on the contrary, their zealous outlook enriched the world of art Brahmanical art, however, surpassed the range of Buddhist art with its huge mythology and pantheon , with the rise of Tantricism, a sort of revolution in the fields of art, religion and literature began which helped in gradually ousting Buddhism from this country

From here Brahmanical art lost its transcendent elegance and serenity The freedom of expression won by it led it introduce most sensuous and erotic subjects and unrestricted delight of love exhibited within the sanctity and serenity of the place of worship and in the lap of cosmic art

We find here, nevertheless, flowering of a great art in religious garb by virture of which the artist found his freedom of expression and sharpened his imagination and exhibited excellent workmanship It was, now, that he achieved great success in depicting the truth of human mind and body— the delights of the senses and the flight of the mind It was here that he could convey his message with profound clarity

and ease which he had lost in creating the gods being obliged to follow the canonical strictures and observe the sanctity attached to them.

The male and female forms that he created now are exuberantly natural and fluid , there is an aroma of living flesh—of soft and pliant body , there is action and expression heightening the overall effect and validating the bold attempt of the artist All these demand a careful observation and evaluation as the actual purpose and necessity of creating a world of sensual delights has so far eluded us When we consider the individual artist as an inevitable and inseparable part of the society all the blame of creating such unhesitating eloquance of human delight cannot be his lone share

No doubt the artist sometimes becomes the master of the situation and fashions the contemporary life and influences the current dogmas and reforms the social values at his will But the society soon wakes from the stupor, from the hypnosis and from the overwhelming power of individual and employs the artist as its agent and the art as its tool and dominates the individual pushing all the separatist and rebellion forces into oblivion Although the harmony between the two creative forces is never lost, according to Leonhard Adam, ' once a work of art is in existence, society alone can provide the public who will make use of it '[5] Religion, which employs art in its service is itself very much vulnerable to the changing values of the society as well as individuals Any false step taken by the society may germinate similar seeds in the religious atmosphere, and since the religion casts a lasting impression on society it becomes a problem to reform and reset every thing in perfect order

We find that the religious centres that were once at the height of their glory in one particular age suffered a calculated neglect of the society of yet another and became an object of great criticism and scorn

(b) Universality of Art

Whatever is beyond human understanding and knowledge leads man to strive to uncover the mystery of it He strives to find meaning to everything that puzzles him and he strikes hard to shatter the veil of mystery This gives birth to art Art thus is the child of man which represents the unintelligible spirit and expression of its father It bears the history of mankind

Art represents the eternal and universal elements of man It is not the need of man but provides a stable and solid understanding which may go a longway in the cultural history of mankind

road to Rinkingpong On the approach road, at the 8th mile, will be seen the St Joseph's Convent Girls' School, maintained by a French Order of nuns from Chandernagore Small boys are also taken here Both boarders and day scholars are accepted

On the slopes of Rinkingpong will be seen numerous private residences, whose number is increasing yearly, especially now that certain stringent building restrictions have been removed Rinkingpong can never become congested, as Darjeeling, as Government forbids the erection of more than one residence in each plot, which is roughly at least an acre in extent

From Durpindara, the top of Rinkingpong Hill, formerly used as an artillery observation post, a wonderful view of the Teesta River, four thousand feet sheer below, is obtained, as well as, on a clear morning, a panorama of the snows, second only to that seen from Tiger Hill, near Darjeeling

of his own creation He creates his own gods, his society, his religion, his ideologies and his moral codes, he substantiates his needs by symbolic representations so that in one way or the other they act as guiding factors

The creator becomes the slave of his own creation—in purporting the good of humanity he fetters himself by the chains of moral, social and universal codes so as not to let himself be a prey of devil within himself The magnanimity of the ideals conducive of influencing the people of an age conforms to make an universal appeal to the people of subsequent periods The ideals remain invulnerable until there may appear some uncompromisable moral, social and religious discrepancy According to Rene Huyghe,—"If art is so closely linked with man, to the point of changing as man changes, it is because it is a reflection and an expression of him, almost an extension of him "[6] This is true with the artistic creation through which man expresses his inner-self so that he may bring to light the universal truths visualised and realised by him He gives his best in building up of an ideal world

As Indian life, Indian art too is very much the product of the religious philosophy based on which they not only expatiate, propound and construct the basis and meaning of life but also transcend their own character Indian art represents the truth of Indian thought and way of life In the days when communication was very slow the extent to which the thoughts travelled and influenced the people is a matter of surprise We find in the field of art and literature the same intensive, widespread and fanatic activities and almost identical work being carried out in the country which not only created a competitive fervour but also destructive frenzy against the rival groups But the one aspect that of the prevalence of any one religion and exception of art activities during any one period was everytime equally widespread and extensive In some cases we find common trait and trend prevalent during a period in many parts of the world, in the field of either literature or art The erotic trend, for example, is found in literature, of almost all countries, in the period coinciding with the period in this country, i e , from 8th century A D to 13th century A D We may not, however, possibly account for the reasons for this large-scale shifting over from the ideals of previous period to the ideals of the later period of sensuous and erotic expression in art

If the intellectual class of soceity in a particular period shows disintegration and decadence in its moral and social codes in its behaviour and life and in its expression and thoughts with the strong backing

of religion and the priests Overlooking this fact we may notice a great upsurge in the field of creative activities The plastic art of India in the above period devoted itself totally to eroticism and the artist had now found the magic-touch by which he created superb sculptures produced ever before This activity can not be ascribed to the limits of land and people Difference in style, treatment and skill, however, may show variance as the trend and symbols of art changed with the emergence of a certain faith in equal magnanimity of the faith of the preceding period

Consideration of the propriety of eroticism in art and literature becomes difficult particularly when they happen to be associated with the sanctity of religion and include various gods Beyond the control of any authority however strong eroticism developed in the lap of religion.

Indian art has always portrayed human sentiments and expressions marked with sensuousness and sincerety It illustrated man almost in every mood and finally presenting the sexual impulse of man purporting a compromise of the inner-self of man with his outer-self

(c) Impact of Religion

Spiritualism is a system by which the quest of the Unknown is made , and a synthesis between man's own spirrt and the Unknown Spirit is achieved through knowledge, the Truth The process of this synthesis is called Yoga [7] Truth uplifts man and that which uplifts and helps to attain salvation is religion—'Dharma' This religion is knowledge and, therefore, the Truth Religion enlightens the vision of man about the mortal and transcendental worlds and leads him to the eternal goal —the salvation [8]

With the development of mind man becomes more and more restive in pursuit of knowledge To establish universal principles and to guide mankind whatever is expressed by man in symbols, forms and colours, and in words, letters, music and dance is known as art All these arts express the flight of the human knowledge and man's achievements That which was expressed in symbols and such theories which attempted to describe the nature of the Unknown and that which laid down the process of discovering the Truth is known as religion

The concept of religion developed in man because of the uncertainty of his life, his littleness in comparison with nature and the purpose of man's birth in this world We find art and religion supplementing each other's need and that both thrive on physical and psychological necessities of man The former is the source of satisfaction and rest to

his everactive mind and engages him in creative activities, while the latter is the source of spiritual peace, enlightenment of his soul and mind and protects him from wrongful and sinful acts Both of them enlarge his field of activity from limited self to limitless humanity and open the gates of approach to the deity

This approach of man to the deity was due to the feeling of obtaining spiritual support through knowledge and belief He had already developed in him the faculty of adjustment to his fellow beings with his own urges and had also learnt to take formidable measures of protections from natural calamities For this he obtained the spiritual and psychological support of his God He could now very much depend on his imaginery deity for a sort of protection mingled with suffering as punishment for his sins and mistakes There came the evolution of the philosophy of *Karma* or the action through which salvation could be attained

This world and everything that exists in it is illusion It is just like darkness in which nothing can be seen and nothing can be known and this is the nature of the unknowing (Ajnana) 'Illusion is the experience of the form of darkness '[9] This darkness is like a covering due to which man is unable to see the reality and this covering can only be lifted by knowledge (Jnana) The *Vishnu Purana* divides the veiling power of Nature into three stages, (1) The transcendent (*Para*), all pervading power, (2) the power of experiencing or knowing external forms (Kshetra-jna) which is the non-transcendent, the Cosmic Intellect, the world-planning-process, and (3) a third power, action (Karma) which is the manifestation of unknowing (avidya) [10] Religion shows him the right path to salvation , and this path to salvation is not beyond the law of action It is within the action that the Nature is active The only way to free oneself from action is an unattached state which is the product of knowledge For achieving this liberated state the realisation of the Truth and of the Supreme Soul is the only means This Supreme Soul manifests in this world and in this human soul too, and, therefore, this world and this soul are Brahma [11] To visualise the image of this Brahma man evolved mantras or thought-forms 'Verily the body of the deity arises from its basic thought form (or Bija Mantra) '[12]

In the beginning there were symbols and later proper images of God were evolved The first image, that we know was of Buddha, was made in the Kushana period In the Gupta period strictures and canons of sculpture, architecture and painting were laid down and very scientific and artistic images of God were made and temples built It was in

this period that the expressions given to the divinities looked as if were charged with the divineness of the other-world The art, thus, reached the height of perfection, but it never lost its value, originality and vigour. It also never became slave of religion, on the contrary, religion found through it a new life and meaning, vigour and stability, and shape and form

Indian art has, in truth, revealed the philosophical and psychological understandings of man, it has synchronised the developments of the two, spirits one visual and the other theoritical , one aesthetical and the other spiritual or philosophical

The artist in giving form and shape to the beliefs and doctrines of religion formulates his own experience, knowledge and vision, creates images and himself becomes the worshipper in the process which requires purity and sincerity of thoughts and perfect vision and understanding of his object The artist adjusts his feelings according to the needs of the society and in this process he finds vision, imagination and universal outlook, and whatever he creates remains in harmony with his inner-self and truth He finds peace He is spiritually transcendentalised He feels as if his soul is liberated "In India, the ultimate aim of life is Release (*moksha*) and art is one means of attaining this aim "[13]

It is in Khajuraho that we find free play of the senses and ideals and morals portrayed in stone There are on one hand the Gods who defeat the army of Kama and on the other hand there are those men who enjoy the delights of the senses They act like humans Still there remains a marked difference They keep themselves unattached even in the deepest involvements, they are the ones who enjoy life but remain unaffected at the same time The supreme delight of the human senses is achieved in the appeasement of the sex The artists have so seriously represented the human love-play that it appears as if a most pious act was being performed in which the figures were engaged with profound interest and devotion, with intense feeling and purity of heart In the sublimation of the sex impulse the sublime goal of human life, the salvation, was probably being sought The transcendence of the other-world—the divine bliss was being matched with this worldly bliss There appears a doctrine successfully symbolised and portrayed by the artists The erotic pattern of the humans shown so close to the divine aspect bewilders us It reveals the deep understanding of the artists, his approach, knowledge and skill The artists must have conceived the great idea of sex and religion in the context of the theory of progeny They must have considered complications involved in the depiction of the same in the

temples If the prıncıples for whıch these were conceıved could be properly understood, theır presence would not have offended us ın the way ıt does today

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6

Effect of Tantricism and other Sects on Art

(a) Buddhism and Jainism

The Buddhist philosophy was basically individualistic and deeply humanistic in its conception and gained popularity among the people Brahmanism, on the contrary, has been the religion of the masses and preached the divine theory of the manifestation of god in everything perceivable and the attainment of the divine status for human beings through the observance of strict discipline and devotion



Now that Buddha had come as a saviour of mankind , Brahmanism conceived of Krishna—in whom every one found a god suiting to one's own taste and temperament Buddhism, on the contrary, could not present the Buddha except as a compassionate and ideal human being who took several births in several wombs to propagate the truths of life There is in him deep love, sympathy, pardon and remorse for the suffering humanity and creatures , whereas Krishna

is as human as divine He enacts the most human character along with occasional superhuman deeds which established and maintained a link between this-worldly and other-worldly souls He preached involvement in one's duty, punishment and pardon for one's actions, submission —total submission, dedication and worship for the worshipper, and finally prescribed complete freedom of the soul and oneness of man and god

In Buddhism, originally, existence of god was not propagated—there is no submission of man to any god Buddha was, however, raised to the status of god in the Mahayana Buddhism and was also accepted as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu in the Brahmanical fold The latter could be possible because Buddha had not preached differently from Vedism or Brahmanism, he only denied the seperate existence of the soul, and he had discouraged being asked his opinion regarding the existence of god He preached of what concerned the personal life of man , according to him, the happiness and sufferings of man depended on his actions and conduct, and hence man must carefully enter upon action The Buddha tried to establish righteous mass and denounced the sacrifice of the innocent animals

With the spreading of Buddhism to Central Asia and other neighbouring countries Buddhist art found new forms and expressions influenced by local traditions Spread over a period of about a thousand years the art traditions of the Buddhist artists ranged from symbolism to proper images of Buddha and from human idealism to divine transcendence

There appears a gradual refinement in the carving and modelling of the figures, and great ingenuity in the presentation of human life in its multitudinous expressions pulsating with devotional frenzy and oecumenical ideals portrayed vividly in hundreds of thousand human figures, animals and birds

Outstanding developments in the art of Buddhism may be witnessed in the free-standing pillars with wheel, lion, bull, elephant and horse capitals of Ashokan times , railings and gateways of the stupas of Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh-Gaya, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda , Cave temples of Karli and Ajanta , and the Buddha images sculptured at Gandhara, Mathura, Sarnath and by the artists of Gupta and Medieval periods

In the themes carved at Bharhut, Sanchi and Amaravati we find figures of animals and human beings in the background of vegetal, all look like a big family of devotees and of the suffering creatures who have thronged to taste the divine love and peace, and to achieve the

sublime release which the Saviour had in store for them

In the Buddha images there appears a synthesis of the two worlds, and the vagueness and expressionlessness of the earlier symbolism found a meaning in the physiognomy

We find a gradual refinement in the images sculpted in a continuous drift of art traditions of different peroids until Gupta period when along with the images of Hindu gods the Buddha images were made according to highly scientific canons These images fill in the onlooker the consciousness of the gods they represent in the most acceptable human form and give him psychological and moral support

The rise of the Mahayana Buddhism, in the Kushana period, was the result of the changes taking place in the Brahmanical religion which had evolved the Krisna Bhagavatism to counter the popularity of Buddhism Now Buddhism split into two major branches—Mahayana and Hinayana of which the Mahayana Buddhism "represents the conquest of the simple creed of Gautam by Hinduism[1]" To compete with the overpowering force of Hinduism "Buddha was exalted to the position of the god of gods"[2]

Later in the Gupta period hectic art activities all over north India brought a synthesis between Brahmanism and Buddhism There existed great spirit of religious tolerance among the people which was the result of spiritual synthesis and philosophical affinity in the two religions and the art activities Although Buddhism survived the blow of Bhagavatism, it was to face a new religious current of the Tantric philosophy which developed now Brahmanism had proliferated to the worship of goddesses as the female principles of the gods

While the different sects of Hinduism were adopting the Tantric way, the Mahayana Buddhism was considerably influenced too, and the section of Buddhism which accepted Tantric worship of Shakti prescribed female deities Taras, to be associated with the Buddha This section of the Mahayana Buddhism is known as Vajrayana

The Vajrayana conceived "five Dhyani Buddhas (Buddhas in meditation), each with a Shakti, Prajna or Vidya Thus there are Akshobhya with Lochana, Vairochana with Tara, Ratnaketu with Mamki, Amitabha with Pandara and Amoghavajra with Aryatara"[3]

During the reign of Pala kings in the eastern India the art activity influenced by the Vajrayana Buddhism was mostly centred in Tibet and Nepal, where Buddhism was in a flourishing state, and in the present state of Bihar, Bengal and Assam

In the 8th and 9th centuries more female deities, termed as Taras,

were introduced in Vajrayana The images of this period have improved workmanship and finer finish Several images were made at Nalanda Till the end of 12th century Mahayana had been extinct and Vajrayana too was being slowly absorbed by the Natha and Sahaja cults

The rulers of the states in northern India were either the worshippers of Shiva or Shakti or Vishnu The Chandellas were devout worshippers of Vishnu and Shiva It is, however, an established fact that the followers of Buddhism and Jainism were present in their kingdom The only literary work available of the period *Prabodhachandrodaya* mentions of the 'Saugata' branch of Buddhism Surprisingly we find no Buddhist shrine in the region and have only one Buddha image belonging to the period fashioned in the style of the images of Vishnu, Shiva and the avataras of Vishnu and the Tirthankaras It is difficult to establish a clear account of Buddhism within the Chandella territory It may be contented that since there are temples dedicated to some of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu at Khajuraho, Buddha as one of the incarnations may have come from one of the temples from the series of temples dedicated to the incarnations We do not find any creditable account of Buddhist art in this period or in the subsequent period

Jainism is said to be as old as Vedic religion we find references of the two Tirthankaras Rishabhadeva and Aristnemi in *Rigveda* Rishabhadeva is also mentioned in *Vishnu Purana* and *Bhagavata Purana* where he is described as a great Yogi and the Lord of Yoga

In C 4th century B C Mahavira constituted the Jaina philosophy and is known as the leader of the Jaina religion He disregarded the Vedas and their teachings yet did not refuse the identity of the soul, its flight and the release Thus Jainism was not much different from Hindu religion

Jainism split into two sects, viz , Shvetambara and Digambara, in the 1st century B C Jainism travelled to extreme south during the Mauryan period and had its centre in Mysore In the 1st century A D Kharvel of Kalinga embraced Jainism Mathura and Mysore were the main centres of Jainism in northern and southern India respectively From 5th to 12th century A D many of the dynasties of South India made considerable contribution to popularise the faith In the 11th century AD it was the State religion of Gujarat and had a great influence in Rajasthana It, however, lost its dynamic hold when the growing power of the Moghuls was felt in all spheres

The Jainas, like Buddhists, constructed stupas and temples In the 11th and 12th century AD, in Central India, many temples were constructed and numerous images were made. At Ellora there is a Jaina

sanctuary belonging to 8th century A D The figures carved in the temple have a distinct rigidness in comparison to the images of the subsequent periods There is not present that other-worldly charming transcendence and supra-human spirit of the images of Buddha and the Hindu gods but the Jaina images do have in them the essence of semi-divine, semi-transcendent and "Supreme human triumph" [4]

A Jaina temple complex in the outskirts of Khajuraho village constitutes an unique group of 25 Jaina Temples dedicated to the even number of the Tirthankaras These images are very much different from the Brahmanical images in spirit, but the style and treatment and the decoration on the lintels and the gates are almost similar

Man suffers constant changes and aspires for faultless life until he attains salvation He can free his soul from the bondage of the *karmas* "only by austerity and meditation The Jainas believe neither in God nor in the divine mercy Man is the maker of his own freedom or bondage" [5]

The nudity of the Digambara Jain Tirthankaras in no way is the cause for the eroticism in Jaina plastic art but it is the influence of the dominant erotic phase in the art of the country in general

The next and last phase of Jaina plastic art includes the temples on Mount Abu which belong to 11th century A D to 13th century A D The delicacy of carving and the figures of the Nayikas and Apsaras has its own charm besides the chaste erotic element and the pervading sensuousness throbbing and pulsating in the fleshy structure and creeper like movement very much in contrast with the images of the Tirthankaras which stand "rigid, erect, immobile, with arms held stiffly down, knees straight and the toes directly forward" [6]

Brahmanism

In Brahmanism the Indian metaphysics reaches a new high where everything perceivable and otherwise is divine and a part of the Unknown Supra-power "That one God is hidden in all He is manifest everywhere and is the soul of all lives He is the Lord of action, refuge of all lives, all knowing, ever vigilent and without any quality He alone controls the inactive and splits the seed of nature into numerous forms " [7] To know this Manifest Power has been the goal of all investigations One who realised the Truth-gained knowledge became one with God [8] On attaining the above state the human soul becomes free of the bondage of rebirth, "It never returns " [9] But it is not possible for everyone to realise this Soul which manifests in all life

Only those great men who have a sharp insight are able to perceive this soul[10] prescribed austerity and worship of the God with complete submission and purity of inner-self Because "Worshipper who has a pure inner-self and ceaselessly remembers the formless God realises through the purity of knowledge"[11]

Although the sacrifices of the Vedic times came to be discouraged in the later period of the *Upanishads* and the question of attaining salvation was discussed in the light of the sufferings of man This resulted in the growth of a pessimistic society and escape from the sufferings was sought in renouncing the worldly life

In the later period of the *Upanishads* when the concept of Brahman and Atman evolved so as to establish a direct communion between man and his God the forms of the Supreme Spirit or God became more clear in the mind of man He is considered as one with Atman Brahman manifests in all things yet is different from all things

We find almost contradictory statements regarding Brahman in *Upanishads* At one place He is identified as without quality and creates, at other the Brahman is the Supreme Being and the Atman is limited at others Atman and Brahman are one and also different

The Supreme Power of the Vedic time is given the name of Paramatman or Brahman in the Upanishad period, and the human life is considered to be the result of actions—*Karmas* of man This led to the belief in rebirth and *Karmas*

We find no trace of image worship in this period also but the concept of religion seems to be gradually becoming clear and wide The *Upanishads* gave preference to the renunciation where as in the Vedic period man's mind remained engaged in finding answers to many questinos concerning man and the Nature

This was the time when Jainism and Buddhism emerged on the scene raising doubt, unrest and revolt against the puritanism and orthodox religious pattern of the day The Brahmanism in its hey-day was a religion in which Gods were invoked and worshipped by uttering mantras yet there was a great necessity of proper images for the pnrpose of worship The advent of Buddha images threatened the popularity of Brahmanism Images of the Brahmanical gods were also made to counter the impact of Buddhism

The canonical strictures prepared at this time became *causa sine qua non* of the images to be prepared of all religions of the day and of future Ranging from 5th century A D to 15th century A D the making of images was a flourishing trade in Northas well as South India

In the sculpture of next outstanding phase of 7th to 9th century A D a great resurgence of Brahmanism has been recorded with unmatched enthusiasm, patience and labour surpassing human imagination This imposing endeavour of the untiring believers of the faith reached a further high at the Elephanta caves in this period Here the gods and semi-gods present a panorama of the celestial grandeur and impressive other-worldly sight The Mahabalipuram sculpture of the Pallava period in the 7th century A D representing pictorial compositions of the stories from the mythology go a step further to give the populace glimpses of the glorious chapters of the mythology in order to revive the deep faith and religious leanings in the rich heritage of the country

From 10th century A D onwards the art of the country took an altogether different trend by producing most sensuous and erotic sculptures in all parts of the country It seems as if a perennial current of erotic trend flowed past the sphere of art, literature and religion and the artists were busy unawares in the similar activities of the creation of superb artwork in their respective fields

At Bhuvaneshvara and later at Konarak in Orissa most charming sculptures were made together with the construction of massive temples The images of gods, the amatory couples and the Nayikas and Apsaras are the outstanding works of art with charming and delicate appearance and lovely expressions With a new trend in the art of sculpture and architecture at Bhuvaneshvara a new chapter opened in the last phase of Indian plastic art lasting for about three centuries We observe in these sculpture a gradually increasing sensuous treatment which gave the body excessive flexion and delicacy

Hereafter comes the period of the Khajuraho sculptures in the 10th century to 12th century A D when the same spirit of eroticism found a great refinement in style and finish and thousands of images of gods and amatory couples and Nayikas, Apsaras were sculpture to from a part of embellishment to the decorative facades of the architectural mass

During the above period frantic artistic activities were going on in different parts of the country The outstanding among others are the works from the temples of Bihar and Bengal, mount Abu in Rajasthan and Tanjore and Tiruvannamalai in South India Intricate and delicate carving are the main features of these works

In the 13th century A D some of the most beautiful temples were made in the southern parts of the country The Sun temple of Konarak,

remains of which are enough to suggest the existence of enormous superstructure of the main temple in its full glory.

Later in the 14th century a sudden cessation of art activities is seen, because of the Muslim invasions, in the northern India With the exception of the construction of some temples and victory towers in Rajasthan and a few temples at other centres But in South India the making of images in bronze came up as a cottage industry and the production of such images is going on uninterrupted to this day.

In later Brahmanism influence of various small sects dug deep so as to force radical changes in its framework This cost Brahmanism loss of its past image The small sects influenced the masses with their curious ways and esoteric religious rites They hit Brahmanism with great clamour and demonic strength Brahmanism, therefore, made winning allowance to some of the occult rites, new gods and new dogma as a result of which the temples were filled with most sensuous and erotic sculptures

The bowing out of Buddhism from the land of its origin was chiefly due to the sudden change in the policy of the religious orthodoxy of Brahmanism On every step Brahmanism struggled to out-match the simplicity and humbleness of Buddhism by relaxing its rigidity and by adopting such popular codes and rituals as were once considered dangerous

Brahmanism, which had considerably lost its hold on the masses, as if awake from stupor from the momentary set back it had experienced with the popularity of Buddhism, although it had not lost its glowing image of the past its reawakening came with great enthusiasm and vigour and with added attraction of marvellous temples and impressive images of numerous gods Concessions and liberties, unknown here-to-fore, in many religious matters were allowed The plastic art of the Gupta period helped to restore the prestige and popularity Brahmanism had lost Because of the rich Brahmanical pantheon and mythology, and the developments of the plastic art in the country, it was possible for Brahmanism to stage a come back with considerable speed and influencing authority It wiped out completely the imposing superstructure of Buddhism Buddhism lost the battle not because it lagged behind in any way in the race of artistic activities but it lost due to the tolerance shown towards it by Brahmanism and the assimilation by it of all the qualities that it had

The deification of Buddha in the Mahayana Buddhism was nothing but an attempt to save Buddhism from Brahmanism But the process of fusion of the Mahayana Buddhism with Brahmanism never stopped,

and there appeared again the Vajrayana Buddhism in which many of the rituals of Brahmanism and its myths were combined with Mahayana Buddhism Here we find the Tantric effect on the philosophy, art and literature of both the religions , and later erotic concept of tantricism in the perspective of cosmic creation opened the gates of erotic art and literature The medieval trend of eroticism must have some bearing on the social and individual thinking of the time It may be ascribed to the relaxation in the moral codes and permitting the teaching and knowledge of sex as a necessary branch of science because the principal desire and psychological outburst of the sensual drives of man always has the layer of sex behind them It may be believed that religion was much more flexible and culpable than individual and society which dominated over it It may be due to the process by which religion acts to humble down the society and therefore the individual of letting loose the drives of man to dominate and wear out soon and then humble him to realise his mistake himself In this process Brahmanism lost its prestige and popularity which it regained subsequently

The Brahmanical erotic art centred chiefly around Sun and Shiva as these gods were considered responsible for the creation of life, besides these each and every god was imagined with his feminine aspect representing his energy The union of the god with his energy was the cause of creation This theory was probably the outcome of the primitive religion of the fertility cult in which the feminine aspects of the gods were given predominence over the male gods

"Shiva is known as the destroyer in whom all matters disappear and from whom they come to life again "[12] Shiva is also known as the lord of lust and therefore the representation of the *mithuna* images and the eroticism focussing the worship of Shiva does have some meaning and logic

"Of what is and has been and is to be, and what moves or remains still, the Sun alone is the source and the end "[13] So also "The Sun is the Soul of the world" [14] Thus the Sun was the lord of procreation and at Konarak his association with the creation was proclaimed

The Brahmanical art heritage thus covers the entire period of Indian art and the developments during several important phases of religious upsurges show the change in theme and spirit in accordance with the philosophies of the respective periods Switching over of people from the worship of one deity to another, however, enriched the country's art and literature, although this shifting of faith very often helped the destruction of many important works of art at the hands of the fanatic followers of these faiths, we have been left with an enormous wealth of

the art of different periods which has helped us in evaluating and making a chronological record of the developments

Shaivism

Of all the forms of god worship the worship of Shiva seems to be the earliest The concept of Rudra, Pashupati and Maheshvara appears to have evolved in the remote past, as references of these names are available in many Puranas and Epics The name Shiva is a later addition In the Vedas there is mention of Pashupati which probably resembles its prototype Rudra Mention of Shiva and Girisha is also available in some Vedic literature Out of the abstract forms of these prototypes a very powerful God Shiva ultimately emerged in the later period when the Aryans settled with the non-Aryans of the country At this stage phallic worship referred to Shiva worship prevailed within the non-Aryan fold and the Aryans could not easily accept this form of worship The Shishnadeva of the non-Aryans was renamed by the Aryans as Rudra and in course of time he came to be known as Shiva But the Aryans could not very much accept this god for a considerable long time The worshippers of Shiva were despised and considered to be unfit for the civilized society They were also considered out of the Vedic fold and as of lower castes

Later when the Aryans began to accept the non-Aryan womens in marriages Shiva worship found its access to the Aryan community The legendry Asuras mentioned in the epics were shown as the devout worshippers of Shiva from whom they received the boon of invincibility and became a perpetual headache to the gods and men alike

There were a number of fertility cults in which worship of Linga was the main ritual, the other forms of worship included the worship of bull (Nandi), snake, trees and the female organ (yoni) Shiva came to be represented in the form of Linga for the powers of procreation attributed to him

In course of time Shiva was accepted as one of the prominent members of the family of gods—the trio of the Brahmanical pantheon, the other two gods being Brahma and Vishnu Shiva is associated with the act of destruction but he is also the one who creates and preserves He also confers grace and has the power of concealment He is described as the source and exponent of various arts and as the Lord of the creation

In the *Vedas* it is said that, "Rudra gives to the sinner the fortunes of hell",[15] and "Rudra is the god that kills"[16] Rudra causes (men) to cry"[17] He is described as the Lord of Fire[18] Rudra and Shiva

are identified as one in Puranas[19] as they possess the same powers

The *Upanishadas* describe Shiva as the Cosmic Being "made of all the principles of the elements" "Fire is his forehead, the sun and moon are his eyes, the directions of space are his ears, the Veda is the voice, the mind that pervades the world is the breath which raises his chest, his feet are the earth He is the inner-self of all living beings "[20]

Shiva has been mainly assigned the power of destruction appears in two stages , the first is death, the second dissolution of the subtle individuality the one is the end of physical existence, the other liberation from its subtle bonds Thus there are two aspects of Shiva, the one fearful and the other desirable, the one immediate, the other transcendent

"As the end of all living things Shiva is the Lord of Death, as the origin of all creation he is the fount of life "[21]

With his female aspect 'Shakti' he is believed to be the cause of life, and the Lord of Lust Shiva is said to unite with himself, "Perfect beauty can see only itself reflected in itself No other mirror would reflect perfection Hence divinity is "by its own beauty bewildered" [22] "He divides his body into halves, one was male, the other female The male in that female procreates the universe "[23] This union of Shiva and Shakti, male and female is symbolized in the forms of the Hermaphrodite and (Ardhanarishvara) of the Linga and the Yoni The Linga worship is a mental state where the supreme god is visualized This form of worship is the transcendental form of worship and is related to knowledge The meaning of Linga is that the God is one it symbolizes mind Knowldge is the Yoni Thus mind has to be merged into knowledge and this is the path to salvation and, therefore, worship of the Linga with Yoni is the way to knowledge Linga represents Shiva and thus, "it is not the Linga itself which is worshipped but the owner-of-the-Linga, the Progenitor, the (Supreme)—Man (*purusha*) The Linga leads to the Supreme Man, to Shiva, whose symbol it is" [24]

The nature is described as womb[25] and Shiva as the Lord of Nature who enjoys it Everything in creation is in reality, Brahman [26] Ishvara is Brahma limited by maya The world is created by Ishvara, or Brahma associated by Shakti Shiva is the static Absolute Shakti is his dynamic divine power Shakti cannot exist without Shiva Shiva cannot exist without Shakti

The worship exclusively of Shiva by a section of society prevailed in small sections and this helped in the evolution of independent cults of worship for each one of these sections as is evident in the case of

Vishnu and Shiva or Shakti Shiva was often exclusively worshipped by a large section of the people, yet it could not be said that Shaivism was different from Brahmanism

We come across two major sects of Shaivism Shiva-Bhagavatas and Pashupatas , other minor sects being those of Kapalikas and the Kalmukhas The former two are included in the sect of the Shuddha Shaivas or the Agmanta Shaivas These are different from the Vedanta Shaivas who have definite leanings in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* The Shuddha Shaivas consider Shiva to belong to three main principles Lord (Pati), the individual soul (Pashu), and the fetters (Pasha) They prescribed four stages of life for the worshipper Charya, in which the worshipper goes through prescribed duties and rites , Kriya, in which he has to undergo confirmatory sacrament (*diksha*) , Yoga, in which he makes communion with Shiva, and Jnana in which he seeks true knowledge to prepare himself for liberation

The Kashmir Shaivism is known as Trika for its belief in three forms of Shiva Pati, Pashu and Pasha Trika has two subdivisions known as Spand and Pratyabhijna, but these two neglect the disciplined way of life The Spanda contemplates the God in his inner-self while the Pratyabhijna seeks a perceptor to make him realize and identify his own-self with the God

One of the prominent sect of South India is of the Vira Shaivas or Lingayats who worship the Phallic emblem Linga and carry the emblem on their body The other sect is of the Nayamars who worship the god in the temples

Shaivas in general worshipped Shiva Linga as the emblem of their deity and the sanctum of the Shiva temples generally had the Linga as the only object of worship

As the earliest prototype of Shiva or Rudra or Pashupati we find the figure of a man seated in yogic posture on a static seal from Mahenjodaro (circa 5000-3500 B C)

Surprisingly we find no trace of any prototypes of Shiva in the Mauryan period in which the art activities centered arround the Buddhist religion particularly so in the time of Ashoka the Great

Not until the emergence of the great Guptas the Brahmanical myth and god were represented in plastic art Probably the first Shiva sculpture belongs to A D 458-9 which was found at Kosam In this Shiva is accompanied by Parvati

Ranging from 5th century A D till 15th century A D different schools in North and South India were busy making exquisite images of Shiva and the members of his family

The iconic forms of Shiva have been divided into two categories, *ugra* or terrific, and *saumya* or peaceful types Shiva alone or Shiva-Parvati or Uma-Maheshvar images come in the peaceful types, whereas the Bhairava, Aghora, Raudra Pashupata, Virbhadra, Virupaksha and Kankala images are classified as the terrific types

In the 6th century A D in the post Gupta period in the Badami cave temples, Shiva theme was profusely carved

The Ellora caves have exquisitely fine images of Lord Shiva belonging to 7th and 8th centuries

The images of the Elephanta caves of 7th and 8th centuries very much indicate the attempt of the artist to fill the back-ground by figures of semi-gods and other heavenly bodies in various postures and attitudes, and giving the images slenderest possible body to magnify the delicate appearance

The medieval period has a distinct and profuse appearance of Shiva in the art of Orissa, Central India, Bengal and Bihar, Gujarat and Northern India Of all these places the Shiva theme profusely carved in the temples of Khajuraho are outstanding

The Chandellas worshipped Shiva with other gods of the Hindu pantheon and paid equal respect and homage with same devotional feelings This is evident from the presence of Shiva temples within the temple complex occupying prominent place along with those of Vishnu and his manifestations

In the 10th century A D the Khajuraho artist skillfully portrayed the gods in an altogether different background for which the Tantric philosophy may be given the credit The erotic theme exhibited here has given the artist ample opportunity to evolve new forms and give extremely sensuous modelling

Surrounded by the erotic splendour the figures of Lord Shiva in multifarious forms, as the victor of Kama—the passion, are inset in dexteriously ornamented body of the shrine Many of his figures are nudes and have a sword and a serpent in two of His hands , He bears placid expression and winning smile In many others He is in lordly glory alone or with His consort—Parvati endowed with charmingly affectionate looks. There are other forms of Shiva, terrific and peaceful, placed in the niches showing the Tripurari Shiva, the Ardha narishvara, Nataraja, Shiva-Parvati, Bhairava, Aghori Shiva etc , which make the shrines glow in the divine splendour with meaningful complex purpose

The Linga is the main image placed in the sanctum of the famous Shiva temple. There is also one four headed Linga in one of subsidiary

shrines on one of the corners of the platform of a temple. In front of the Vishvanatha temple there is a Nandi shrine with a colosal Nandi

The figures of Shiva have most delicate and sensuous modelling matching the style and form of the characteristic Chandella art The Shiva images of Khajuraho exclusively express the power of Shiva in mastering Kama and remaining unaffected even in the act of the creation

Thus we see that the evolution of a god who not only destroys but also creates has helped in giving his worshippers vast opportunity to link Him with their personal and secret rites so as to sanctify the most important function of the male and female that of creation and transcend its purpose by seeking salvation through this mundane act For this reason the Khajuraho temples have an important place in teaching the most complex philosophy of life F Sierksma rightly says that, "A god too is a social agreement, a convention"[28]

Shaktism and Tantricism

The origin of Shakti cult has been traced to such antiquity as is attached to the Vedic religion Although the Shaktas differ in principles from the Vedic dogma they do not reject the Vedic ideals which according to them were meant for the people of the Vedic period As according to the Tantra the creation was the result of the union of Shiva and Shakti so in the early stages of Shaivism and Shaktism there was similar belief maintained by these But since the Shaktas believed the male as the passive force and the female as the active force and the origin of creation, the two sects fell wide apart with their separate mysticism

It is often believed that the Shakti worship must have existed, in some form or other, in very remote past as the worship of mother goddess Gradually the predominence was given to the male deities Although in the Vedic period many natural powers were recognized as female deities and which belonged to the superior group too The Epic and Puranic concept of the gods and goddesses is much indebted to the Vedic concept

In the Shakta philosophy, goddess is the supreme power and the necessity of a male counterpart is almost ignored. The Goddess is considered to be the Supreme Power "She is the power of the Self , She it is who creates appearance" [29] In *Devi Upanishad* the Goddess says of herself that, "I am the form of the Immensity , from me the world arises as Nature and Person (*prakriti-purusha*)" *Devi Bhagavata* says that, "She is the form of all that is conscious The origin, the knowledge, the perception of reality, the instigator of intellect".[31]

In *Shakti Mahimna Stotra* the Shakti is manifest as Matrika Shakti in the Universe[32] For the Shaktas the creative force and therefore the God was female According to the Shaivas the male god, though being inactive, creates the universe through his female aspect and that for this the union of male and female aspects was a necessity Shiva representing the Purusha and always remains passive, and the Devi, symbolizes Prakriti is active

The Shaktas believe that it was Shiva who originated the Shakti worship by creating 64 different Tantras[33]

To worship is itself the worship of Shakti it may be in any form whatsoever, direct or indirect In direct form it is the worship of the Self and the indirect worship is the worship of either some god or symbol of the Shakti Shaktism aims at the attainment of release like Shaivism yet in reality it aims at the accomplishment—*siddhi* from the Mantra, the Yantra and the Yoga predominently formed the rituals of Shakti worship.

The Shakta-philosophy believes in dualism according to which the matter in the root cause of creation is dualistic and is known as Shiva-Shakti and the Illusion or Maya which is the world process—the power from which the existence appears to arise is also the basic tendency of Shiva-Shakti When fully developed this power transforms in shape of creation

Shakti has two functional powers one transcendent knowledge and the other power-of-ignorance or the power-of-illusion (*avidya*) It is due to this power-of-illusion that the manifestation of the perceivable universe takes place The Shakti is "the supreme and all pervading consciousness"[34] and "the point limit from which the manifest world begins "[35]

The Shaktas adopted the Yoga as principal ritual for the *siddhi* In fact Yoga contemplates at the realisation of the relationship of the body and the Soul and at the unification of the individual soul with the Universal Soul Yoga is the process by which the mind is brought under control and it diminishes the identity of the mind so that the path of salvation opens for the soul

Yoga makes the transcendental powers to come to life. The vision of God is not possible unless the mind is totally directed towards God Renunciation is effective for control on the worldly desires But the Shaivas and the Shaktas believe that this control can only be achieved not by renunciation but by involvement The Tantrics believe that "world and its pleasures, are ephemeral, the results of Maya , but reality is not different from Maya , and if Maya is properly pursued,

the pursuit will eventually lead to supreme reality, or the Universal Soul Hence there is no need for man to be morose, to be liberated"[36]

The process of Shatachakrabheda i e , the awakening of Kundalini Shakti, coiled and dormant cosmic power, the supreme force in the human body says that "When Kundalini sleeps in the Muladhara chakra, man is only aware of his immediate earthly circumstances When she awakes and unites with the Supreme consciousness in Brahmarandhra, the reservoir of light, man is no longer sensitive to his own limited perceptions but is instead participating in the source of light itself Kundalini is the 'Lunar Woman' Of her it is said "What need have I of any outer woman ? I have a lunar woman within myself".

"Owing to the complete intensity of embrace, the two, all-pervading ones, Shiva and his Shakti, becomes as it were a single principle in a bliss which is the highest non-duality In the ultimate reality, however, there is neither Shiva nor Shakti Only the one without a second is ever existing and will ever exist, as infinite complexity in total unity "[37]

The Shaktas follow two different forms of ritual, one in which the goddess is seen in her mother aspect the other in her wife aspect The followers of the former way are known as the Dakshinamargis, and those of the latter as the Vamamargis The latter believe in the actual presence of their wives during the rituals These women are worshipped either one by a group of male devotees or one each by one male devotee

The Dakshinamargi worship aims to achieve the samadhi, the 'identification' "from which he never wakes though his body may remain alive as an unconscious automation for a certain length of time".[38]

Categorically speaking there are three main paths of identification "The way of immobility or nonaction, the way of cohesion, and the way of disintegration

"The way of nonaction rejects equally all good and evil, all forms of religion or irreligion This is the path of the Yogis, who have mastered their own selves

"Then comes the way of cohesion, (the Dakshinamarga) that of the satva (cohesive) quality, which aims at purifying man from the bondage of Nature (prakriti), the chain of his instincts

"The path that corresponds to the disintegrating tendency (tamas) (of the Vama-marga) uses the power of Nature, the passions and instincts of man, to conquer, with their aid, the world of the senses This way leads directly from the physical to the abstract because,—the descending tendency is at both ends of the manifested This is the way

which may utilize even eroticism and drunkenness as means of spiritual achievement" [39]

In the Indian Sculpture the aspect of motherhood of the female forms remained prominent throughout the active period of Indian plastic art. It is this quality in the sculpture that give it exuberant charm, sensuousness and delicacy thereby manifesting in it the fragrance of the flowering youth and inherent love of motherhood for all creatures

The earliest examples of such female forms are the Yakshis of Sanchi and Bharhut which possess, apart from their stocky physique and rigid appearance, the fleshy wealth of the breasts and hips The Vrikshaka types of Sanchi in a three-fold-flexion of the body do suggest the feminine delicacy with the clear indication of the motherhood accentuated with the symbolic tree laden with fruits The same trend is visible in the sculptures of Yakshis of Mathura and in the female from the donor couples of Karli and Kanheri of 2nd century A D. Great improvements in plastic forms of the females of Amaravati with increased delicacy, slenderness and expressive physiognomy and their creeper-like movement and flexibility decidedly set the stage for the evolution of the image of goddesses in the Gupta period Thus the origin of the icons of goddesses is from the female forms available in the early Indian art may help a great deal in evaluating the ultimate development of the erotic element in art of the later period

For the Shaktas, "She is the great Mother, the Mahadevi who conceives, bears and nourishes the universe sprung from her womb" [40]

"The Vamamargis, give greater importance to the wife aspect of the goddess, and they consider symbolic worship (of the Dakshinamargis) as futile when the real stuff is available Their nocturnal rites are known as Chakra Pujas (circle worship) as the congregations sit in circles for partaking of the Panchatatvas These circles are of different kinds, some constituting the lower grades of initials who have not got over social standards and conventions completely,and others of Viras or heroes who are fully initiated into the mysteries and, as such, capable of appreciating practices which may not appeal to the timid Again, in certain circles, a single woman is worshipped, while in others each worshipper brings his own Shakti " [41]

The Panchatattvas which constitute the ritual of the Vamamargis are a course of five elements the names of which start from the letter 'Ma' viz , Madya (wine), Mamsa (meat), Matsya (fish), Mudra (parched grain or corn), and Maithuna (copulation) The Mahanirvana Tantra describes the characteristics of these five elements saying that, "the first

element is that it is the great medicine that helps humanity to forget sorrows and generate cheerfulness and joy of life The second element —is nourishing to the body and increases intelligence, energy and strength Fish increases generative power The fourth element Mudra is grown on the earth and as such is the root of life, easily obtainable and the sustainer of all life The characteristic of the fifth element is that it is the cause of the greatest pleasure and joy in creation, the power that generates life and the mainstay of this universe , as the universe is without beginning or end, so is sexual power" [42] "These five actions lead man to inner perfection "[43]

"The Kularnava Tantra says that, spiritual advancement is best achieved by means of those very things which are the causes of man's downfalls "[44]

There may be the fear of calculated misuse of the ritual of the Vama-marga "it is the only method which may bring actual results Passion alone, when astutely directed, can overcome egotism and pride and sordid calculation Alone it has the momentum to draw man away from the bonds that chain him to his interests, his beliefs, his virtues, his reputation" [45]

The Vama-marga preaches the practice of both liberation and through which the identification of the individual self with the universal Being is possible

The Kularnava Samhita says that, "Through enjoyment one gains liberation , for enjoyment is the means of reaching the Supreme abode Hence the wise who wish to conquer (the spirit) should experience all pleasures" [46]

The enjoyment and pleasure are the reactions experienced in the mind through the insatient consciousness called 'Sattva' or 'Buddhi' in the Yoga system This enjoyment is caused by the union of sattva with satient 'Purusha' the two opposite elements "This consciousness of identity of Buddhi and Purusha in practical life is technically called Bhoga" [47]

It is in the Gupta period that we find the Tantric conception making headway into Brahmanical ideology Earlier to this Brahmanism had, however, evolved the conception of female aspects of the trinity as their 'Shakti', the actual development was seen in the plastic art of the Gupta period when the visions of the great thinkers and seers were translated into form and shape The feminine grace and beauty in the images of the goddesses of the time express the limitless desire of the artist to bestow the female forms all the natural delicacy softness and pliant appearance within the scope of the befitting dignity of the

divinity and the motherhood The conception of the mother goddess, however, gave enough creative scope yet the artist showed his reverence, by adhering to the canonical descriptions When he set to work he bore in mind that he was making an image of the mother We observe the motherly aspect of the female persistent in the art of the earlier periods the examples of which are available at Sanchi, Bharhut and Amaravati in the Yakshis and other female figures

In the art of the Gupta period much developed forms of the female prototypes are available in the river goddesses—Ganga, Jamuna and Sarswati and later in the goddess Durga The evolution of Durga seems to have come from the Durga image at Aihole At Aihole and also at Badami there appear, for the first time, *mithuna* figures of Shiva-Parvati and Kama-Rati and others They, however, do not reach the artistic standard and treatment as in case of the individual figures of gods and goddesses

Later at Ajanta the female forms in fanciful and most expressive attitudes open the gateway to the most fascinating women that were to be made later At Ellora the slender Durga and suppine Parvati, a few *mithunas* and river goddesses, though stocky, indicate the endeavour of the artist to achieve the feminine delicacy through forms and shapes The fulfilment and success in achieving the desired effect is reflected in the slender and delicate Durga engaged in grim battle with the Buffalo demon

In the last phase of Indian plastic art beginning from about eight century A D Tantricism gave freedom to the artist to express the human forms in most unimaginable way and in atmost sensuous character, who created most gorgeous and exquisitely fine human and divine figures with great ingenuity and skill The plastic art of this period outclassed all the characteristics of the previous periods The *mithuna* figures were employed in the act of love—to depict the transcendent pleasure expressed through the symbolic eroticism as according to the Tantras and that "liberation can only be achieved through contact with woman in this world, by means of a sexual pilgrimage" [48]

"Indian symbolism and art now come to combine lyricism with cosmism, compassion with power, and sweetness with grandeur "[49] The expression of man could not have remained puritan when there was a growing tendency to achieve more and more sensuous and intimate knowledge of the physical aspect of everything, as would be clear from the treatment of the sculptures in different period

It would be inadequate to say that the erotic representation in

art was totally inspired by Tantric philosophy The trend of eroticism in the art of India shows a gradual shifting up ideals from the rigid mass to the sensuousness in the plastic representations The Indian artist would have created what he did to emphasise the Tantric philosophy had there been no Tantrism, no esoteric sects or even no Kama-Shastra

The evolution of Tantricism, more or less, unsheathed and sharpened the desire of the artist to create the most sensuous human forms hiding nothing, not even the fire of passion and the artist employed his imagination and craftsmanship to give the world the most beautiful flowers in plastic art



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7 एको देव सर्वभूतेषु गूढ़ सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ।
कर्माध्यक्षत· सर्वभूताधिवास साक्षी चेता केवलो निर्गुणोश्च ॥
एको वशी निष्क्रियाणा बहूनामेक बीज बहुधा य करोति ।
Shvetashvetaropanishad, 6 11-12 1

8 स यो ह वे तत् परम ब्रह्म वेद वसैव भवति ।
Mundakopanishad, 3 29

9 न च पुनरावर्तते ।
Chhandogya Upanishad, 8 15 1

10 एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढ़ोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रय्याबुद्धया सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभि· ॥
Kathopanishad, 1 3 12

11 न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा
नान्येदेवैस्तपसा कर्मणा वा ।
ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्व-
स्ततस्तुत पश्यते निष्कल ध्यायमान ॥
Mundakopanishad, 3 1 8

12 यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते येन जातानि
जीवन्ति यत्प्रयन्त्यभिर्सविशन्ति ।
Taittiriyopanishad, 3 1

13 भवद्भूतस्य भव्यस्य जगमस्थावरस्य च ।
अस्येके सूर्यमेवेक प्रभव प्रलय विदु ॥
Brihad Devata,, 1 61

14 सूर्य आत्मा जगतस्तस्थुषश्च ।
Rig Veda, 1 115 1

15 पापिना नरकार्तिदाता रुद्र ।
Mahindra, Commentary on the Vajsaneya Samhita of the Shukla Yajurveda 16 33

16 रुद्र सहर्ता देव· ।
Atharva Veda, 1.19 3

17 रोदनात् रुद्र ।
Kurma Purana, 1 10 24

18 अग्निर्वै रुद्र ।

Shatpatha Brahmana, 5 3 1 10

19. विशुद्धोऽय तथा रूद्र पुराण शिवमुच्यते ।

Lınga Purana, 1 3 10

20 अग्निमूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्रसूर्यो दिश श्रोत्रे वागविवृताश्च वेदा ।
वायु• प्राणो हृदय विश्वमस्य पद्भया पृथ्वी ह्येष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥

Mundaka Upanıshada, 2 1 4

21 Alaın Danıelon, "Hındu Polytheısm", Ch 15, pp 191-2

22 विस्मापन स्वस्य च सौभगर्द्धे ।

Karapatrı, "Lıngopasana Rahasya" Sıddhanta, II, 154

23 द्विधा कृत्वात्मनो देहवधेन पुरुषोऽभवत् ।
अधेन नारी तस्या स विराजमसृजत्प्रभु ॥

Manusmrıtı, 1-32

24 लिगे प्रसूतिकर्तार लिगिन पुरुषो यजेत् ।
लिगमर्थं हि पुरुष शिव गमयतीत्यद ॥

Shıva Purana, 1 16 106-7

25 म वृद्धिं गच्छतीत्यर्थाद्भग, प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

Ibıd, 1 16, 101

26 जगज्जीवेश्वरत्वादि सर्वम् ब्रह्मैव केवलम् ।

Skanda Purana, Brahmagıta, V 110

27 एषा माहेश्वरी शक्तिर्न स्वतन्त्रा परात्मवत् ।

Ibıd, Suta Samhıta, ı, 8 21

28 F Sıerksma, "The Gods as we shape them", p 18

29 एषात्म शक्ति , एषा विश्वमोहिनी ।

Karapatrı, "Srı Bhagavatı Tattva" Sıddhanta, V p 160

30 साब्रवीदहं ब्रह्मरूपणी, मत्त प्रकृतिपुरुषात्मकं जगत् ।

Devı Upanıshad, 1-2

31 सवचैतन्यरूपा तामाधा विधा च धीमहि । बुद्धि या न प्रचोदयात् ।

Devı Bhagavata Purana, 1 1

32 विश्व व्याप्यचिदात्मनाऽहामत्युज्जृम्भसे मातृके ।

Durvasa, "Saktı Mahımra Stotra"

33 चतु षष्ट्या तन्त्रे सकलमभिसंध्याय भुवनं,
स्थितस्तत्तत्सिद्धि प्रसवपरन्तत्रै• पशुपति ।
पुनस्तवन्निर्ब धादलिपुरुषायेय घटनात्,
स्वतन्त्र ते तन्त्र क्षितितलमवातीव मिदम् ॥

Shankaracharya, "Saundarya Laharı"

34 चितिरूपेण या कृतस्नमेतदव्याप्य स्थिता जगत ।

Markandeya Purana, Ch 85-34

35 सच्चिदानन्दविभवात्सकल्पात्परमेश्वरात् ।
आसीच्छक्तिस्ततो नादो नादा द्बिन्दुसमुदभव ॥
Karapatri, ibid, Siddhanta V

36 P Thomas, "Incredible India", Ch 9, p 90

37 Ajit Mookerjee, "Tantra Art in Search of Life Divine", Indian Aesthetics and Art Activity, 1968, pp 65-67

38 Alain Danielou, ibid, Ch 32, pp 381-2

39 Ibid

40 Arthur Avalon, "Serpent Power"

41 P Thomas, ibid, Ch 9 p 94

42 Arthur Avalon, Tr of "Mahanirvana Tantra"

43 Karapatri, "Panch 'Ma' Kara Siddhanta" III, p 290

44 यैरेव पतन द्रव्यै· सिद्धिस्तैरेव चोदिता ।
श्रीकौल दर्शने चैव भैरवेण महात्मना ॥
Kularnava Tantra

45 Alain Danielou, ibid, Ch 32, pp 382-5

46 भोगेन मोक्षमाप्नोति भोगेन कुलसाधनम् ।
तस्माधत्माद् भोगयुक्तो भवेद्वीश्वर· सुधी ॥
Kularnava Samhita

47 सत्वपुरुषयोऽअत्यन्तासंकीर्णयो· प्रत्यया विशेषो भोग ।
I P V V , Vol , p 156

48 Miguel Serrano, "The serpent of Paradise"

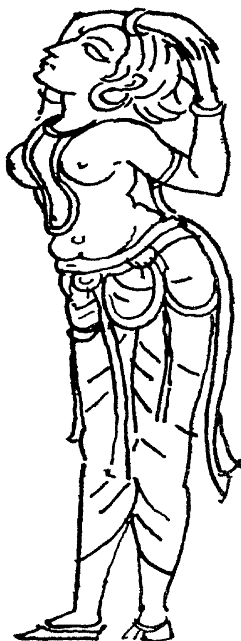
49 R K Mukherjee, "Cosmic Art of India" Ch 1, p 40

7

Religious Theories and Symbolism

(a) Evolution of Supreme Power and theories of Creation

The evolution of gods is the foremost factor that dominated human thoughts In the beginning the natural phenomena were considered as powers that influenced the life of man and caused sorrow and happiness, to seek protection from which man began to worship these powers of nature as gods There the concept of a supreme power is absent The effort of finding a principal cause of creation materialised in the post-Vedic periods Addition of Rita in the divine fold further strengthens the conception of the supreme power Rita stands for the physical order which reigns everywhere All gods were obliged to follow the physical and moral orders of Rita



We find yet another principle known as Hiranyagarbha or the Golden Egg, also known as Prajapati, Vishvakarma and

Parama Purusha, responsible for the creation of the entire universe Though "There is one reality , sages call it by various names , They call it Agni, Yama, Matarisvan"[1] This is also an attempt to establish one god as one supreme reality This one reality is identified as Atman or Brahman by the *Upanishads*

This Brahman is further classified as higher Brahman and lower Brahman [2] The higher Brahman is indeterminate, unconditioned and devoid of attributes while the lower Brahman is determinate, conditioned and endowed with attributes The lower Brahman creates the world by entering into the forms he wishes to create [3]

The higher Brahman or the Para Brahman "is devoid of all sense-organs, and yet possessed of the powers of all senses"[4] This Para Brahman is the Atman or Self

Here we find two different forms of God merging with each other for the purpose of creation One Supreme God known as Para Brahman emerges as Ishvara—as the creator—known as Apara Brahman This Apara Brahman creates the world by Maya or various powers [6] Thus we witness yet another factor, i e , Maya, emerging here as responsible for the act of creation by Ishvara Ishvara is possessed of Maya or Prakriti "He creates the world out of his own power or Prakriti Prakriti is the conscious power of God which can create the multiform world of various objects [7]

Shaivism and Shaktism describe Shiva or Shakti as the Supreme power that creates the world with the power of Prakrti "All created beings, inanimate and animate, are in the nature of Shiva and Shakti"[8] The other principle, Purusa, has been called Jiva or Atman not only in Shaiva philosophy but Vaishnava philosophy also This Jiva has been called Brahma [9] Shakti like Shiva is also considered Brahman in Shaktism She is thus the creator of the universe, Prakrti, Purusa and individual souls Apart from her being considered Brahman she is the power of Shiva, without the union of which Shiva is unable to create

The Vaishnavism regards Vishnu as Brahman He is the Para Brahman or the Nirguna Brahman and also the Apara Brahman or the Saguna Brahman (Isvara) His creative power is Maya Jiva is Isvara, i e , Brahman limited by Maya [10] The *Upanishads* regard the oneness of Brahman and jiva and whatever is perceptible to the sense-organs is not truth nor is that truth which is experienced by the mind The knowledge of the above reality led to the goal of release which was gained by sacrifice penance, and renunciation In the later period of the epics the whole attention was towards the

liberation from all bondages and the possibility of other births. For this purpose the laws of action were the guiding principles.

Contrary to the philosophy of the *Upanishads* the philosophy of Charvaka regards whatever perceptible as truth It not only denies the existence of God but past and future births, laws of Karma, the other worlds, the liberation, etc It, however, maintains the existence of soul which according to it is another form of body.

As the denial of God is advocated for attainment of pleasure no action is wrong or unvirtuous, and past and future lives are denied. Since only the present remains before man, he must enjoy all the pleasures without fears of future birth

The generation of the world is described to be without any cause Since the virtue and vice are not accepted the Charvakas reject Dharma and Moksha theories

It is noteworthy that in all the above traditions there is a marked difference in the theories of life and liberation but still there is an effort to establish the superiority of only one God Even in the Charvaka philosophy there is no answer to the question of the causes of the creation

The Samkhya philosophy is the philosophy of reason. In this attempt existence of God is denied and no transcendental speculation has been done, no cause has been assigned for the evolution of the universe Perception has been given the pride of place Perception leads to inference

The evolution is ascribed to Prakriti from which all the elements of the universe are created without having a beginning or end "The effect pre-exists in the cause in a potential condition , the effect is a modification (*parinama*) of the cause, it is a manifestation, development, or redistribution of the cause "[11] Nothing new is created

The manifestations of the world are only modifications of five gross elements (*mahabhutas*) which evolutes, incapable of producing a new mode of being and are just as gross and perceptible as the matter they represent

According to Samkhya, Prakriti and Purusha are opposite in character Prakriti the object of knowledge (*drisya*) has been described as active but unconscious, while Purusha the subject of knowledge (drasta) as inactive but conscious

The three constituents powers of Prakriti—sattva guna, rajas guna and tamas guna are the essence of all things

"The formless Spirit (Purusha) cannot act by itself because it has no vehicle , the Cosmic Substance (Prakriti) can have no urge to

action because it is inanimate, therefore, it is only by the union of Spirit (Purusha) and Matter (Prakriti) that existence can manifest "[12]

According to Samkhya theory "Suffering is due to ignorance, desire, merit, and demerit The knowledge of the self destroys ignorance Liberation can be achieved by knowledge "[13]

The *Samkhyakarika* mentions that, "By virtue an ascent to a higher region is obtained , by vice a descent into a lower Deliverance is gained by knowledge, and bondage by the contrary

"By the absence (or destruction) of passion there is dissolution of Nature (Prakriti) or (the power of Nature is destroyed) Transmigration is from disorderly passion By power we gain destruction of obstacles, and the reverse by the contrary "[14]

The Yoga philosophy advocates the same theory of Prakriti and Purusha but at the same time recognises the existence of God According to the Samkhya knowledge is the means of liberation The Yoga adds concentration, and action to it

God is the creator of Prakriti and causes evolution and dissolution of the world He helps Purusha to the achievement of liberation Yoga lays great stress on the laws of Karma According to Yoga philosophy the suffering is caused by ignorance and the liberation is achieved by knowledge [15]

Nature is the chief force which has two contradictory functions, and Yoga is the means to bring these two ends to control and union Yoga unites the inner force, Life and the outer force, Death It prescribes ways by which the individual consciousness and the Universal Spirit are united and the individual soul is eternally released.

Since Jainism and Buddhism had to face strong antagonism and condemnation of Brahmanism there appears great inclination towards atheism due to the orthodoxy of Brahmanism which very much restricted the people in performing the worship and sacrifices and study of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* People were attracted towards new sects which promised the people much more easy way to salvation Thus Brahmanism suffered humiliation, disrespect and criticism Jainism and Buddhism advocated moral restraint and discipline and totally removed the concept of super power

The Jaina philosophy is close to Samkhya philosophy as it agrees to the dualism of matter and spirit, i e , of Jiva and Ajiva which according to Samkhya are Purusha and Prakriti This matter or Jiva is comparatively active than the Purusha of the Samkhya. The Jiva by austerities floats upwards to Nirvana, its final release

Jainism recognizes right knowledge as the means to achieve liberation besides right faith and right conduct While denying God Jainism agrees with the Samkhya that the substance is permanent, though its qualities and modes are created and destroyed The liberation is achieved by the absence of Karmas, and by realization or knowledge of the self

Buddhism also denies God and preaches the observation of virtues of charity and a moral life It acknowledges the preachings of the *Vedas* and considers the laws of action as of great value Its theory of liberation is very much common to the theory of Brahmanism Buddha says that, "Now this, O monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of pain the cessation without a remainder of that craving, abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment" He preaches the eight-fold path for cessation of pain namely, "right views, right intention, right speech, right action , right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration"[16]

In the epics we find Prakriti as power of God, Purusha as the eternal conscious principle, and Brahman as the Lord of both the principles The other important aspects are the laws of Karma or action and the conceptions of previous births and rebirths Conscience is given an important place The good actions are termed as religion or dharma as guiding principle and control over the actions and desires of man through which man finally achieves liberation By wrong and unvirtuous actions he defies dharma and is bound to take rebirth

Liberation is achieved by realization of the self—Atma and the knowledge of non-difference between the self and God Knowledge is gained by performing the prescribed duties with detachment and virtuous actions There should be no desire for fruits of actions Freedom from action which is freedom from the fruits of actions leads to liberation

In the later period of the sectarian *Upanishads* each God of the Trinity, some of the manifestations of Lord Vishnu, and the family members of Shiva, is regarded as Brahman or Ishvara The cult of Shiva, however, appeared as much more influential and popular Many principles and rituals of Shaivism were adapted by other sects Influence of Buddhism also made great impact The yoga was recognized in every step, and all actions were termed as yoga The Tantras also had sufficient place in them This was the time when a great competition between Jainism, Buddhism, and Brahmanism had overtaken the masses. Each of these religions assimilated ideas

of each other and made daring reforms so as to maintain their hold on the people

The next period is of *Puranas* These prescribe elaborate rituals and ceremonies and have liberal codes of ethics and duties, and show easy ways to liberation The worth mentioning aspect of these *Puranas* is the principle of devotion Since God has two forms, *vyakta* and *avyakta* or *saguna* and *nirguna*, the modes of devotion are based on these forms

The Tantric philosophy that influenced all the sectarian thoughts advocates the theory of only one God and the principles of previous birth and future rebirth giving a pride of place to human birth which is considered as the ladder to liberation Human body finds an important place, and self-preservation is prescribed till the truth of existence is realized Non-attachment of mind and whole of the being is the means to acquire knowledge of the Supreme Truth The guru finds a special place as it is he through whom knowledge can be acquired , because it is through him that the Voice of the World-Teacher speaks, it is through him that one can be delivered from the bonds of the world This way of liberation has been called as *kaula-dharma*

Lord Shiva says to his spouse, Devi, the compassionate Mother of the Universe that, "There is One Real —— He is Shiva the Para-brahman, all the jivas, the myriad creatures, are portions of Him, like the sparks of the Fire" Attached to the Ancient Ignorance and regulated by their own volition and action, influenced by their environment, they go on passing from birth to birth Of these the human birth is the most important for it is then that one becomes awake aware of his state of bondage and the necessity of release and is in a position to take steps for his liberation from its hold

"But not all are aware of the precious opportunity afforded by this human birth which is verily the ladder to liberation Dharma leads to Jnana, Jnana to Dhyana and Yoga which inevitably lead to Mukti *or* liberation Therefore, tend the body till you realise the truth of existence

"For the Truth is to be realized here in this life So, as long as the body lasts, exert yourself towards the goal of liberation

"Freedom from desire, nonattachment, is the only way to liberation all evils are born of attachment

"Therefore, give up attachment, give it up wholly, *sarbatmana*, not by the mind alone, but by the whole of your being including your desire-self. Jnana, real knowledge alone can give the liberation

And this Jnana is received through the word of the Guru.

"Afflicted as you are with three-fold distress, take to the shade of the Tree of Liberation, on whose branches flower Dharma and Jnana, the Right Law and the Three Knowledge, and whose fruit is the World of Bliss. In a word, the way of liberation lies in the *kaula-dharma*, the Royal Road of Shakti."[17]

All the above developments in the fields of religion and religious philosophies of the country have been the causes for the unstinted faith, high moral character and unconscious stream of truth that permeated the hearts and minds of the people of this country ever since the beginning of the civilization. In all the phases of cultural and religious turmoil during every important period of history we find religion as the dominant force which not only influenced individual and social life of the people it helped also to build and rebuild and glorifying and transcending the cosmic life to attain the heavenly bliss, which was aimed by man in all ages. This high aimed spiritualism fostered in man the desire for peace, the zealous quest for truth, and the aspiration for attaining liberation.

Religion keeps the human thoughts and actions constantly humble in spirit yet highly ambitious in quality submissive in reverence yet strong in faith, and well-guided by ideals yet charged with individuality. This dualism in existence, ideals and faiths gave birth to several sectarian doctrines which had developed their own dogmas and idealism but had principles very much in common. This flexibility in the nature of the principal religions not only gave opportunities of self-evaluation but also created sometimes conflicts, confusions and chaos. Still we witness in the people enough tolerance, goodwill and spirit of co-existence. Brahmanism being the source of all major as well as minor sects not much harm was caused to it by the occasional breaking up; on the contrary, it saved itself from the separatist forces within it which fell out without much effect. Although Jainism and Buddhism had considerably influenced the masses and had attracted a large, following the threat poised by both of these religions diminished to the extent that Buddhism was completely wiped out from this land. The quality of assimilation of the thoughts and principles of other religions and sects along with the divinities not only enlarged the Brahmanical pantheon but also opened parallel paths in the quest of the Truth—of God and of salvation.

The greatest threat to the popularity of Brahmanism came from Shaktism or Tantricism, which had once become the most widely spread religion in the country. It not only influenced Brahmanical

thought but also Jaina and Buddhist principles, the result of which can be seen in the *mithuna* sculptures of these religions The conception of the female aspect of the divinities brought synthesis in the old and new forms of rituals and worship This proved fruitful to minimise the effects of Shaktism which disregarded the male aspect totally It is, however, true that some of the extremists as well as the common men brought Shaktism to disrepute by adopting the religion for the sake of their lust for sex disregarding the sanctity and restrictions of the rituals

Jainism and Buddhism also could not save themselves from the devastatingly corrupt principles that invaded their strongholds It was a period in which the freedom of sex swept over all the fields of human life, social as well as religious So much so that pursuance of sex-life was probably considered to be the normal way of life without which man could not liberate himself from the bondages of this world The theory of achieving the heavenly bliss during the span of worldly life was evolved to brand the sex-life as the surest means for the attainment of the bliss through which one could witness the Supreme-joy and bring oneself close to liberation This theory was readily accepted by the people who believed in the theory of begetting a son without whom the path of liberation was closed for the parents

Since religion dominated the life of man the temples and monasteries became the centres to preach the ideals of the day and the people accepted these ideals with great respect mixed with fear lest they might offend the gods There is enough evidence to show that the temples were transformed to the guarded sanctuaries of sex-hunting, the hunters being the religious heads and the authorities of the temples Under the shadow of the blind faith there flourished the trade of flesh and lust, but no sooner the reality dawned on the people these very temples became the dens of bats and dogs, of theives and robbers and of all sorts of miscreants To add to the fateful story the hands of the iconoclasts broke not only the icons and temples they put an end to the unhealthy trait that had infested for long the life of the priests and kings that patronized the temples Thus came to end an era of sex-life that once dominated the society and religion of the country.

(b) Religious Symbolism

Human emotions are expressed through certain signs, emblems and symbols moulded into forms, gestures and words These expressions have rhythm and movement based on the needs, uses, beliefs,

faiths and ideals Rituals, traditions and attitudes of man give them recognition and stability

Art traditions are closely linked with the intellectual developments of man, and the refinement and growth of intellect make man much more dependent on factors like religion Art portrays the spiritual world of man

All factors that influence individuals or societies and bring about change in life of man are knitted together in the art forms of that period, yet it is not always that the social or religious ideals and systems are represented in the art of a particular period

While there is a functional identity between the art forms and religion there is a difference in the fields of their conceptions and representations Religion is pure vision and thought whereas art transforms the feelings, emotions and thoughts into concrete forms

A symbol is neither a sign, an emblem nor a design, it is an evidence of consciousness and life , it is a vision indirectly expressed in a formula It is as "allusion to a relatively known 'thing' recognised or postulated as 'existing'"[1]

There are two types of symbols visual and verbal Both have their origin in human mind yet they have separate existence one of thought and vision, the other of concrete shape and form

Visual symbols include sign, gesture, symbols, etc , as supplementary objects A symbol represents certain other object It is a part of the matter it represents An image is a representation of an object in vision The image physically is a simple representation but in essence it resembles and personifies some unknown object "Father is like Brahman the Creator"[19], i e , father resembles Brahman in quality He is the shadow, reflection and form of the Creator In *Rig Veda* Fire symbolised Earth [20]

Qualities and form can become image or symbol of anything, and an image, therefore, is not image simply but possesses likeliness of an object Reflection, copy, shadow, likeliness and representation are synonymous to each other and also to the word 'image' We worship god's reflection in an image but not the image

The use of verbal symbol can be considered to be the beginning of symbolism It is supposed in Indian philosophy that when the universe was created there was sound only that permeated the atmosphere With the evolution of life and creation of human beings the nature of sound developed to carry meaning and later on man invented words to express his thoughts The sound is an omnipresent factor, it is an analysis and definition of Para Brahman—the Creator What-

ever is past and present and will be in future is the sound The beginning and end, and the eternal and space all are governed by sound Words too are governed by sound The symbol of sound or word is '*aum*' [21] Symbols are formed according to one's own visions or imaginations The faculty of the vision is a great asset to man Symbols may be either universal or individualistic in character and meaning and are interpreted differently by different people due to regional, ritual and mythical differences , and social, religious and individual customs

Symbols are emotion oriented, and the basis of emotion is intellect The intellect is the product of culture and culture is the result of actions Hinduism believes that birth is effected by actions , actions are the by-products of behaviour and behaviour springs forth from religion Symbols and images help the ignorant to acquire knowledge and realize the virtue of actions thus acquiring transcendence or enlightenment

Of all symbols the image is of greater value Images perhaps arose out of the symbols which were used in the sacrifices (*yajnas*) in the Vedic period, and also in the periods when symbols and images were worshipped side by side, as at Mohanjo Daro and Harappa

Image is a perfect symbol for the purpose of representing a deity, it possesses sensuous form, expression and rhythm which are capable of transporting human mind beyond the cosmic plane and which can create an environment of peace, joy and devotion "The value of an image lies in its form rather than in its substance "[22]

Forms and shapes which represent the loftiest ideals of man become universal and eternal principles In these forms there happens to be a proper blending of conception and concept, of basis and product and of reality and imagination

The symbols of different kinds may in appearance be altogether diverse in form and structure but they may have an invisible affinity in character and value, such as a mental figuration, a geometrical diagram (yantra), an anthropomorphic image (murti), a spoken formula (mantra), a particular human being (mother, teacher, etc), a particular fruit, an animal, a mineral, etc)

Man's urges, social obligations and spiritual needs create various problems but the aesthetical and creative expressions of man harmonise and organise his life and character Whatever religion means to man is expressed in art forms where all personal and impersonal characters combine to create forms and symbols Thus the symbols on one

hand provide a means to concentrate upon and on the other reorganise human life

For the Indian artist his work is worship and devotion of God In making an image he creates a form that arises in the inner-field of vision and would personify God—as god manifests everywhere The image becomes the God when complete

Whatever man expresses in words, writing and works of art require society's approval and they must be in strict conformity to social as well as religious ideals and standards "A god too is a social agreement, a convention "[23]

The verbal forms—thought-forms—(mantras) uttered in praise of the deities were represented in visual symbols and succeedingly in images The thought-forms include five categories of symbols word, figure, sign, gesture of hands and worship

The word-symbols are called mantras, they were not made but seen by our seers, i e , saints who were known as 'mantradrashta'

The figure symbol *anka* is very much near to word-symbol, it is, more or less part of it and is supposed to possess magical powers like the third symbol of sign, i e , *yantra* The latter is known to bind in concentrated forms the powers of *mantra* and *anka* symbols *Yantra* symbols are of two kinds . figurative and linear Like mantras these too are different for different divinities and worship

The gesture of hands *mudras* are symbolic representations used in different rituals of the last symbol worship or *puja*

The use of the visual symbols in images came with the representation of the deities of the pre-Vedic and Vedic period who were for long known only through thought-forms and sign symbols The sign symbols of the divinities were usually very much identical to their appearance like those of Sun, Moon, and Fire which represented life, creation and destruction respectively

The worship of Lingam and Yoni is the most ancient form of symbol worship They represent mind and intellect respectively. Mind rests in the intellect thus the Lingam is shown resting on Yoni, the symbol denotes the sacred union of Two-in-One, the union of Shiva and Shakti, of Sky and Earth, of Day and Night It is also the travel of mind to intellect which is the path to liberation The worship of the Lingam is for the achievement of knowledge—of truth It is from here that words and sounds have emerged

All the nuances of mind can be represented in symbols From mind originate erotic as well as creative emotions Mind is the seat of all emotions Religion belongs to the inner-self or inner-mind

which is the birth place of literature and art Art is an associate of religion Religion guides man and lifts all cosmic matters to transcendental plane Emotions which take birth during worship or meditation are termed as religion Emotions translated into actions, actions which transcend the cosmic to divine principles and principle which lead to liberation, are all religion

For the welfare and organised functioning of society the mind must be set on ideals and the intellect developed in right manner Symbols have the power of synthetising life, they possess the evidence of consciousness of mind, and they cause social unity, harmony and identity They are visual signs of unseen and unmanifest matters which provide psychic nourishment

The art of sculpture in India begins with religious symbolism What was the form of religion in the earliest known civilisation of Indus valley is not clear, however, the statuettes and figures on seals and the discovery of some structures resembling Lingam suggest that there existed a mixed pattern of worship of male and female divinities The commonly used forms and symbols are of bull, elephant, tiger, snake, tree, bow and arrow, fish, squares, rounds, etc Some of which frame the body of the language embossed on seals After the disappearance of this great civilisation the only evidence of art and history available to us is of the Mauryan times On the capitals of the pillars erected by Ashoka the Great, we find animal figures which bear special significance in relation to the Buddhist doctrine of love for all creatures

Since there had been no encouragement in early Buddhism to image worship, the Buddha is represented by various kinds of symbols and the first image of the Buddha was made at Gandhara or Mathura in the Kushan period The symbols used to represent him are the 'wheel of the Doctrine' lotus, Bodhi tree, *stupa,* the footprints, etc , which in one way or the other signified important events of the life of the Buddha

In the Buddha image all the aniconic symbols fused to express the divine personality. The superhuman, transcendent and divine expression of the Buddha image could be achieved by continuous practice and remoulding, refashioning and refining of all the previous qualities of the images In the Gupta period the Buddha images became perfect, unimaginably fine and altogether divine in expression. The gods of Brahmanical pantheon were now given image forms The legends and myths of Hinduism gave ample opportunity to the artist to represent the gods in visual reality of plastic forms with fluent

lyricism, vibrant lucidity and rich imagination based on thought-forms The images of the Buddha and the gods exhibited, "supreme perfection of form and mature spiritual content" which created "a perfect balance between sensuality and spirituality" and they all possessed "a charm and beauty at once both human and more than human"[24]

The symbolic aspects of the images can be grouped into seven major parts

(1) Sign symbols
(2) Posture symbols
(3) Simile symbols
(4) Attribute symbols
(5) Mithuna symbols
(6) Music symbols
(7) Dance symbols

1. Sign symbols

The following aspects are included in this section sign symbols, mudra symbols and physiognomic expressions

It has already been suggested that the pre-Vedic and Vedic divinities were represented in symbols, moon symbolizes creation, sun preservation, and fire destruction The symbols that were used to suggest the Buddha are The Tree of Enlightenment, the Wheel of the Doctrine, the throne, the pillar encircled by flames, the foot-prints, and the *stupa* (as a symbolic representation of Nirvana) Many of these symbols are related to particular important events in his life.[25]

Mudra or gestures of hands and fingers express the innermost feelings and emotions of heart and mind The earlier forms of mudras prescribed in the rituals of worship in Vedic texts do not have any iconographic significance These are 45 in number and only a few of these have come into the realm of icons, such as *abhaya, varada* and *anjali*

Mudras vary according to representation, gesture and emotions, and denote the consciousness of mind, transcendent vision, mood and feeling, and exhibit the vibrant life accentuated to discipline, dynamism and divine grace that liberate the soul from bondage They also express the serenity of meditation, self-identification and complete submission Mudras of figures other than the images have different symbolism and significance and are expressive of the indulgence, action and emotion suited to the occasion and the purpose

for which they have been created They also do, however, express the unconscious and the subtle mind

A few important Mudras are 'Dhyana or Samadhi, Vyakhyana or dharma-chakra, Vitarka, Abhaya, Varada, Anjali, Shuchi, Bhumisparsha and Tarjani which denote serinity of meditation, dialogue with self, ratiocination, reassurance, accrual of grace or gift, self-surrender, closure of the inlets of the senses, enlightenment of which the earth is the witness and threat of punishment, respectively'

The physiognomic expressions of images are based on the principle of emotions which according to Bharata are eight in number, viz, Love, merriment (Lasya), grief (Karuna), anger (Raudra), effort (Vira), fear (Bhayanaka) repulsion (Vibhatsa) and surprise (Adbhut) All these emotions are portrayed in the expressions of the face and eyes and these are named as *lalita, hrishta, vikasita, vikrita, bhayanaka, bhrukuti, vibhrama, sankuchita, yogini, dina, drishta, vivhata, sankita, kunchita, jihna, madhyastha* and *sthira*.[26]

Since it is the physiognomy that matters most in visual arts, great efforts to express the emotions according to the theme have been made Face is said to be the index of the soul or heart or mind and in art too the same ideals have worked to reveal the innermost emotions

2. Posture symbols

Postures in Indian art vary according to emotions, movements and purpose The following is a short account of various postures that are described in various texts on iconography

The *Silpa Sastras* prescribe three postures[27] for images Sthanaka —Standing, Asana—sitting, and Sayana—reclining These have been each subdivided into four varieties Yoga, Bhoga, Vira, and Abhicharika *Vishnudharmottara* prescribes nine leading attitudes of images Rijvagata—of front view , Anriju—of back view , Sachikrita Sariya—of bent position in profile , Ardhavilochana —of face in profile, the body in three quarter profile , Parshvagata of side view proper , Paravritta—of head and shoulder bent, body turned backwardly , Prishthagata—of backview with upper part of the body partly visible in forlorn profile , Paravritta—of the body sharply turned back from the waist upwards , and Samanata—of back-view in squatting position with body bent The other postions besides these are Madhyardha, Ardhardha, Sachikritamukha, Nata, Gandaparavritta, Ullepa, Chalita, Uttan, and Valit [28]

Abanindra Nath Tagore has mentioned three basic attitudes of

the images according to the body inflexions and movements Abhanga—with no inflexion , Tribhanga—with triple inflexions , and Atibhanga—with multiple inflexions [29]

The *Samarangana Sutradhara* mentions of six pos tures of legs Vaishnavam, Sampadam, Vaishakham, Mandalam, Alidham, and Pratyalidham [30] Images have also been classified on the basis of nine moods (rasa) or emotions Some of the major postures-known as asanas and their interpretations are 1 Padmasana, Dhyanasana or Vajra—Paryanka (cross-legged seated posture)—Yoga samadhi, Silence or Tranquillity (Shanta) , 2 Lalitasana and Bhadrasana (seated posture with one or both legs pendent)—Love (Shringara—Prem), Relaxation of samadhi and compassion, Pathos (Karuna) 3 Alidhasana and Pratyalidhasana (standing posture with one leg stretched and the other bent)—heroic adventure of the soul, fury of violence (Raudra), loathsomeness ((Vibhatsa), 4 Tandava, Nritya-sana (dance posture)—Ardha—Paryanka destruction of the mind, stuff and the world process and wonder and 5 Umalingana and Yab—Yum (Tibet) (masculine feminine embrace)—cessation of duality or experience of void

3. Simile symbols

Indian art proper has drawn upon nature the forms and shapes of human body and limbs There we find a real 'transformation of nature' The poets as well as the sculptors have very much used their imagination in finding suitable objects in nature that could not only resemble parts of human body and limbs but also have the same inherent qualities Flowers, fruits seeds, birds, animals, sky, moon, etc , have given them the suggestive forms, the qualities of which are ingenuously transcribed in their works The similes drawn from nature can well be cited from the classical literature where the poets describe the beauty of a maiden or a man

4. Attribute symbols

In this category a large number of aspects that is associated with the figures has been included, viz , colour , jewels, weapons and adornments , vehicles , multiplicity of hands, and head and man-animal forms Each of these aspects has its symbolic character that enhances the beauty of the figures, that endows philosophical transcendence and meaning to the work of art

Colour symbols concern mainly with the art of painting in which they convey certain meaning, mood and nature of the object painted

The gods have been assigned a colour each according to their functions and emotional background According to *Vishnudharmottara,* "The universe is regarded as the transformation consists of black colour, and through that is the sustenance of worldly life That lord , the creator of all creatures assumes the Krishna form (black colour)[31] some illustrations from various sources are as follows

The colours in which the gods are visualized

(a) *Aparaji tprichcha*[32]
Sankarshana is of yellow colour

(b) *Samarangana Sutradhar*[33]
Sri is of white colour

(c) *Brihat Samhita*[34]
Vishnu is of black colour resembling the colour of the atasi flower

Jewels and ornaments of the images have not only decorative function but they also signify some qualities, viz , "sustenance of worldly life", "pure knowledge",[35] "intellectual knowledge and intuitive perception righteousness success, and pleasure', "Unknowable reality" and so on.

Weapons and implements also contribute to the meaningful interpretation and are represented to denote , conch for "the origin of existence" , discus for "beauteous sight" "mind" , bow for "divine power of illusion" , arrows for "senses", quiver for "storehouse of actions" , mace for "power of knowledge", Sword for "pure knowledge' , sheath for "Nescience" , trident for "three qualities of Nature", the three gunas, and hence the three functions of Creator Preserver, and Destroyer and so on

Vehicles of gods also are embodiments of certain principles Vehicle of Vishnu is Garuda and "is said to represent the hermetic utterances of the Vedas " The vehicle of Shiva is a bull—is taken as the embodiment of the sex-impulse "The vehicle of Ganapati is the mouse (mushaka) The mouse is the master of the inside of everything "

Multiplicity of organs such as of hands and head signify additional super human power of the divinities The four arms of the divinities "express dominion over the four directions of space and thus absolute power, but they also represent four stages of human development and the four aims of life, which are pleasure, success, righteousness, and liberation Four periods of human society into four castes, of human history, into four ages, the four *Vedas* [36]

The four arms of Vishnu "represent the three fundamental qualities

and the notion of individuality"[37] "The four arms of Shiva are the signs of universal power They represent the four directions of space and show mastery over the clements — In some of his aspects Shiva has ten arms These also represent the directions of space and are connected with his five-headed form [38] "The four arms of Kali represent the four directions of space identified with the complete cycle of time"[39] "The abstract concepts of the movement of creation, preservation and withdrawal as significant accents of Being are expressed for instance, in the images of the three headed divinity such as Brahma and Shiva"[40]

In the combination of man and animal forms "certain superhuman qualities associated with animality are expressed—such as Ganesha and Narasimha"[41]. "Ganapati is represented as an elephant headed man to express the unity of the small being, the microcosm, that is man and the Great Being, the macrocosm, pictured as elephant"[42] "The man part of Ganapati, representing the manifest Principle, is inferior to the manifest, shown as the elephant The elephant part is therefore the head"[43]

5. Mithuna Symbols

This form of symbolism appeared particularly in the art of post-Gupta period, and there is a vast difference of opinion regarding its proper significance in the religious background During this period Tantricism had not only influenced Brahmanism but all other major and minor religious cults and sects Tantricism advocates the worship of Shakti and there are five rituals of worship, *pancha-makar* including sexual act The society in post-Gupta period seems to have undergone considerable change and it looks as if the sex was not a matter of indignation or contempt, rather it had assumed the quality of a religious act of creating life The philosophy, literature and art, all portrayed the nuances of life with great emphasis on eroticism and representations of the sexual relations of the divinities and the humans alike The Tantric way of worship believed in the achievement of bliss and maithuna—sexual act provided that bliss, hence was one of the rituals of this religion

The mithuna symbol has been considered to represent "the search for all pervading consciousness"[44] The relationship of the erotic representation in art with religion is evident in the art of almost all the countries and the origin of which can be traced to the primitive man who linked the sex with the process of creation in nature Tantricism sanctified the sexual act by including it as "an instrument of

salvation and bliss [45] Thus the erotic sculptures "come to represent the spiritual in direct confrontation with the carnal"[46]

There are many explanations and theories that interpret the mithuna symbols according to various beliefs and propositions that have come to light through whatever little the literature or Shilpa Shastras or hearsay could suggest

6. Music Symbols

The Indian music has a large number of ragas and raginis, many illustrations were painted in which the characteristics of the ragas were portrayed The lyricism of the poetry and the picturesque description of the lovelorn lady therein are ideal subjects for representation in visual form The musical compositions are very much based on the characteristics of climatic variations, different periods of the day and emotions that are produced in all these conditions Every emotion and natural environment produces its own effect and expresses the human moods in a particular fashion

7. Dance Symbols

Dance symbols portray human emotions in movements, rhythms, expressions and postures of hands and body The figures find greater scope of transmitting out the innermost emotions to become personified in the postures of dance It is, however, important that the expressions be exaggerated to a certain limit so as to give emphasis on a particular mood and this is achieved by dramatic and magnified movements and looks Dance depicts the emotional world through calculated symbolism The intensity of such expressional technique is achieved in the slow or fast or mixed movements in the flexibility or rigidity of the body with a ingeniously balanced portrayal of life through symbolic gestures Dance is deeply associated with music The movements of dance have their origin in the spontaneous reaction to certain emotion that either originate within man's inner-self or influence him from without In Indian philosophy the origin of dance has been described in the process of creation

Thus religious symbolism plays a great part in giving form and shape to visual arts Sculpture in particular uses the greatest number of symbols to convey the complete myth, legend and mystical meaning of the subject portrayed

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Rigveda, i, 164 46

2 एतद् वै परंच अपरच ब्रह्म
Prashna Upanishad, v 2

3 सच्च त्यच्चाभवत निरुक्तंचानिरुक्तच निलयनचानिलयनच
विज्ञानचाविज्ञानच सत्यचानृतच ।
Taittiriya Upanishad, Brahmanandavalli, vi, 1

4 सर्वेन्द्रियगुणाभासं सर्वेन्द्रियविवर्जितम् ।
Shvetashvatar Upanishad, iii, 17

5 अदृश्य अव्यवहार्यं अग्राह्य अलक्षण अचिन्त्य
अव्यपदेश्य एकात्मप्रत्ययसार प्रपचचोपशम
शान्त शिव अद्वैत चतुथ मन्यते, स आत्मा ।
Mandukya Upanishad, i 7

6 मायाम् तु प्रकृतिं विधान मायिनं तु महेश्वर ।
Shvetashvatar Upanishad, iv 10

7 नानाविचित्रजगन्निर्माणसामर्थ्यबुद्धिरूपा ब्रह्मशक्तिरेव प्रकृतिः ।
Niralamba Upanishad, p 217

8 व्यक्त सर्वम् उमारुपम् अव्यक्त तु महेश्वरम् ।
Rudrahridaya, 10

9. आत्मसज्ञः शिव शुद्ध एक ऐवाद्वय· सदा ।
ब्रह्मरूपतया ब्रह्म केवल प्रतिभासते ।
Yogachudamani, 1

10 सगुणनिर्गुणस्वरूपं ब्रह्म । नारायण साकारः ।
तुरीय तू निराकार । साकारस्तु सोपाधिको निरूपाधिकाश्च ।
Tripadvibhutinarayana Upanishad, ii, p 360,

11 J N Sinha, "History of Indian Philosophy" Vol II, Ch 1, p 3

12 Theos Bernard, ibid, pp 92-95

13 J N Sinha, ibid, vol II pp 84-85

14 धर्मेण गमनमूर्ध्वं गमनमधस्ताद् भवत्यधर्मेण ।
ज्ञानेन चापवर्गो विपर्ययादिष्यते बन्ध· ॥ ४४ ॥
वैराग्यात् प्रकृतिलयः ससारो भवति राजसाद् रागात् ।
ऐश्वर्यादविघातो विपर्ययात् तद्विपर्यास ॥ ४५ ॥
Samkhyakarika, 44-45

15 तत क्लेशकर्म्म निवृत्ति· ॥ २९ ॥
तद सर्वावरणमलापेतस्यज्ञानस्तानत्याज्ज्ञेयमल्पम् ॥ ३० ॥
Yoga Sutra, iv, 29-30

16 मुद खो पन भिक्खवे, दुक्खनिरोध अरियसच्चयो
तस्सा येव तण्हाय असेसविरागनिरोधो चागो,
पटिनिस्सगो मुत्ति अनालयो ।
इद खो पन भिक्खवे, दुक्खनिरोध गामिनी पटिपदा
अरियसच्चअयमेश्व अरियो अट्ठगिको मग्गो,
सैययथी' द सम्मादिट्ठि सम्मासकपो सम्मावाचा सम्माकम्मतो
सम्मा आजीवो सम्मावायामो सम्मासति सम्मासमाधि ।

Dhammachakkappavattana-Katha, Mahavagga, Part I, pp 15-16

17 Selection from the Text of Chapter 1 of Kularnava Tantra by Arthur Avalon pp 132-143

अस्ति देवि परब्रह्म स्वरूपी निष्कल शिव ।
सर्वज्ञ· सर्वकर्त्ता च सर्वेशो निर्मलोऽद्वय ॥ ७ ॥
अनाद्यविद्योपहिता यथाग्नौ विस्फुलिङ्गकाः ।
गर्भाद्युपाधिसभिन्ना कर्मभि· करणादिभि ॥ ६ ॥
सोपान भूतं मोक्षस्य मानुष्य प्राप्य दुर्लभम् ।
यस्ता रयाति नात्मान तस्मात् पापतरोऽत्र क ॥ १६ ॥
तद्‌गोपित स्याद् यत्नेन धर्मो ज्ञानार्थ मेव च ।
ज्ञान च ध्यानयोगार्थ सोऽचिरात् परिमुच्यते ॥ २२ ॥
सनाद भवने को वा कूपं खनति दुर्म्मति ।
यावत्तिष्ठति देहो य तावत्तत्व सन्श्रयसेत् ॥ २५ ॥
नि सग एव मोक्षः स्याघोषा सर्वे च सगजा· ।
तस्मात् सग परित्यज्य तत्व निष्ठ सुखी भवेत ।
सगाच्च चलते ज्ञानी चावश्य किमुताल्पिवित् ॥ ५५ ॥
सग· सर्वात्मना त्याज्यः स चैत्थक्त् न शक्यते ।
सद्भिः सह स कर्त्तव्यः सता सगो हि भेषजम् ॥ ५६ ॥
अद्वैतन्तु शिवेनोक्त क्रियायासविवर्जितम् ।
गुरुवक्त्रेण लभ्येत नान्यथा गमकोटिभिः ॥ १०८ ॥
धर्मज्ञानसुपुष्पस्य स्वर्गलोक फलस्य च ।
तापत्रयार्त्तिसन्तप्तश्छायां मोक्ष तरो· श्रयेत ॥ ११८ ॥
बहुनाश किमुक्तेन रहस्य श्रृणु पार्वति ।
कुलधर्ममृते मुक्तिर्नास्ति सत्य न सशय· ॥ ११९ ॥

18 Jung, "Psychological Types", p 601

19 पिता मूर्ति प्रजापते

Bhagavata, 6 7 29.

20 वि सानुनापृथ्वी सस्र उर्वी
पृथु प्रतीक मध्येधे अग्नि ।

Rigveda, 7 36 1

21 ओमित्ये तदक्षरमिद ॅ_ सर्वतस्योपव्याख्यानम् ।
भूत भव्य भविष्य दिति सर्वमोङ्कार एव,
यच्चान्यत्त्रि कालातीत तदप्योङ्कार एव ।
Mandukyopanıshad, 1 1

22 Alaın Danıelou, "Hındu polytheısm", ch 30, p 30

23 F Sıerkshma, "The Gods as we shape them" Intr p 18.

24 Dıetrıch Seckel, "The Art of Buddhısm", Part I, Ch 1, p 42

25 ıbıd, Part II, Ch III, p 154

26 अथ दृष्टिरमिध्यो ललिताहृष्टा विकासिता विकृता ।
भ्रकुटी विभ्रमसञ्ञा सकुचिता (छवितनाप्रीव ?) ॥
ऊर्ध्वगता योगन्यर्थ दीना दृष्टा च विव्हलाचैव ।
स्याच्छिकितामिधाना (विविख्याव ?) जिहनाच ॥
मध्यैस्थैति तथान्या स्थिरेति चष्टादशैव मुद्दिष्टा ।
एता दृशोरथ लक्षणमेता सासुच्यते क्रमश· ॥
Samarangana Sutradhara, 82-14-16

27 Summarısed from D N Shukla's "Vastushastra" Vol II "Hındu Canons Iconography and Paıntıng," Ch II, p

28 ıbıd, ch V pp 127-131

29 A N Tagore, "Some Notes on Indıan Artıstıc Anatomy"

30 Samarangana Sutradhara

31 R K Mukherjee, "Socıal Functıon of Art" Ch X, p 157

32 पीतवर्णा महातेज प्रमुखीकृत मस्तका ।
Aparajıt Prıchcha, 217-8

33. पूर्णचन्द्रमुखा शुभ्रा बिम्बोष्ठी चारुहासिनी
Samarangana Sutradhara, 77

34 अतसीकुसुमश्याम पीताम्बर निवसनः प्रसन्नमुख ।
Brıhat Samhıta, 58

35 R K Mukherjee, "Cosmıc Art of Indıa" Ch Vıı, p 153

36 Alaın Danıelou, ıbıd, p 152-296

37 ıbıd Ch 12, p 153

38 ıbıd Ch 17, p 216

39 ıbıd Ch 22, p 271

40-41 R K Mukherjee, "The Socıal Functıon of Art", Ch X, p 157

42-43 Alaın Danıelou, ıbıd, Ch 24, p 293

44 K M Munshı, "Indıan Temple Sculpture", p 3

45 Kanwarlal, "Erotıc Sculpture of Khajuraho", Ch 8, p 60

46 ıbıd, p 71

8

The Erotic Sculpture

A close study of these sculptures would reveal that almost all of them leaving aside the cult-images and other images of gods and goddesses, display sensuous wrath, intoxicating charm and erotic spirit which bear the most intimate and predominent aspect of human life The power of passion seems to have invaded even the most impregnable minds of the gods, semigods, though not in the same manner as it invades and plagues the human mind which is most vulnerable to emotional drives like feelings of sorrow and joy and stings of passion and senses.



When the erotic emotions, the passionate urge and the desire of appeasement of sense organs attack the mind of man, he often indulges frantically in sex-act or sexual life The sexual needs of man must find timely and full expression Repression of sex leads to several psychological reactions that influence the normal

behavioural pattern and also influence the social life of man, it gives birth to mental disorder, hate, and destructive disposition and endangers law and order.

Here in the portrayal of the sex in kaleidoscopic exuberance we find either complete indulgence or complete withdrawal on the part of human and divine beings, respectively. It is, however, the woman who is seen completely overtaken by the maddening passion and who appears profoundly dedicated to sex and also desirous of the fulfilment of her sexual needs. The passion in her seems to be overflowing the embankments of restraint, eroding the shores of shame and inundating the regions of decency. She seems to be swaying in the tide of passion and maddened by the allurement of sex. She seems to be experiencing unbearable strain in her mind. She appears in her actions as prudish or even whorish, as she cannot hide her anxiety and love and her erotic needs.

It is the woman who is seen even in search of the man—his lover. We find her anxiously preparing for the tryst—suffering the pain of isolation, weeping on her lover's delay or failing to keep the tryst, it is she who entices the man to make her happy. It is again she who actively takes part in the love-play and the sexual-act, bathing in the heat of passion and desire ; there is in her the intense fervour of attaining the motherhood that makes her look whorish in her unabashed acts of embracing, kissing and love-play.

The man, however, gives much appreciable account of himself by not falling an easy prey to her invitation for passionate sport—enticement, action and submission of the woman. Even when he acts he remains unattached in spirit.

Thus these males and females exhibit two opposite emotions: the female appears in an eternal search for the fragrance of love while the male appears to be in the indulgence that concerns his outer-self only—he no doubt satisfies the desire of the woman but ultimately succeeds in maintaining an undisturbed demeanour and unmutilated impression of the virtuous self that remains unafflicted by the sensuous touch of the delicate, soft and warm flesh of the woman. The hesitating surrender of his body does not make him a passionate and an active party in the sex-act. The madly entreating woman wins the body of the man, not his soul. The innerself of man remains unmodulated even under severe entreaty, unburnt at the altar of passion, and floating on the violent ocean of desires.

It is the female figures that have become here the centre of attraction because of their various eye-catching forms, expressions and

actions While they attract the attention of the viewer by their charm, flexibility and sensuousness, they bewilder and bewitch by their unabashed, unhesitating and violent emotions of sex In the prime of their youth they are passion-stricken and crave for the appeasement of their sexual desires So vehement and intense is their expression, so blinding and maddening is their passion that they do not hesitate in adapting unusually vicious, shameless and aggressive expressions towards their men

This splendour of sensuous-play and sex-act is the real life of the youthful maidens but hidden therein is the uttermost truth of achieving the goal of motherhood The fruition is very aptly portrayed in symbolic representation of a lady standing under a mango tree laden with fruits—she too holds a bunch of mangoes in one of her hands and in the other rests the renowned love-bird of India—the parrot The mother-child motif makes the story complete So far no attempt to connect the entire splendour of sex to the fruition of sexual pleasure has been made, moreover this symbolism has been neglected or overlooked It is, however, said that the purpose of the coming of the youth is to prepare a maiden for prospective motherhood [1]

Here all the fancy of the sex finds its culmination in the beatitude of the fruition of love, and the pleasure experienced in the sex act amounts to the state from where begins the path to liberation

The pleasure manifests in the most intimate and the personal action of making love is an experience that concerns only the humans All the desires and needs of his sense-organs except that of the sex-organs can be pacified and fulfilled by personal efforts but in case of the latter a partner belonging to opposite sex is required The emotion of love binds these two persons of opposite physiological and biological qualities uniting them in transcendence of spirit The biological aspect of human relationship is transformed to become the source of divine experience—the bliss that draws man towards the realisation of the futility of the worldly matters and thus man moves beyond his mortal existence to the spiritual world in quest of real truth The pleasure is unique and undefinable as it is experienced with "the innocence of the flesh and the ecstasy of the soul at the same time" [2]

The figures of the erotic theme of Khajuraho temples display refined placidity that arises out of intensity of feelings , they, like true lovers, hide nothing In the voidness of the outerself, the mockery of age and the frustration of youth all have but one solution and goal—to display the mysteries of life—of love and sex, of the highest form of worldly pleasure Not all but a few appear wise who know the

reality—they remain composed, unmoved and unattached, like the divinities, even if they engage themselves in sex-act, they look unafflicted, wise and impassionate although outwardly they appear to be spell-bound, subjugated, and submissive—they are like the yogis who remain in the world but are not attached to it—like lotus in a pond, like fragrance in the air, and like heat in light, unperceivable yet manifest The women are, however, the more conscious and active members They initiate as well as urge the unconscious and inactive men to act, and the men respond to the call as if in dream

The other figures exhibit trivial instinct of unrestricted passionate activities These are the most worldly people who enjoy sex without any qualification, quality, or degree in simple, innocent, and rather foolish manner They act and behave so because they know not what they are doing Their unqualified, unabashed and simple approach to sex helps to reduce the sensuality or vulgarity of their act to minimum and their funny and amusing acts provide a sort of recreation and sport

There are many other figures who act as associates, servants, or attendants They create the environment of preparation, of readiness for the moments of enjoyment, of fulfilment of desire, and of joy to achieve which their mistress is restless and anxious

The artist, however, maintains a difference in expression, movement, and modelling of human and divine figures While he creates the former he adds all worldly charms, love, and passion but in case of the latter he gives them most composed, serene, and transcendental expressions and makes them god-like The rigidity of stone acquires sensuous character

The sculptures are almost in complete round Apart from the modelling the delineation of drapery, hair and ornaments is fluent and distinct and it accentuates the beauty of movement, delicacy or decoration, and the flexibility of postures The treatment, especially of the eyes and eye-brows expresses deep emotions Under the arch of the bow-like eye-brows flash two elongated expressive eyes which narrate the innermost emotions of grief, anxiety, and pain , of love, joy, and humour , and of anger, amazement, and disappointment

In an edifice of Kama (passion)—individuals, couples and groups of people along with attendants make a mixed type of erotic family

The erotic sculpture of Khajuraho can be classified into the following six categories

(a) Reveries of the Passionate Individuals
(b) Amorous Couples (*mithunas*)

(c) Amorous Assemblies
(d) Divine Amours
(e) Erotomaniacs
(f) Attendants and Associates

(a) REVERIES OF THE PASSIONATE INDIVIDUALS

The figures that may be included in this category are of those females who exhibit the emotion of passionate love and who engage themselves in various kinds of erotic activities suggestive of their tryst with their lovers The beautiful females with their sharp erotic expressions set the mind on fire—fire of passion, capable of burning all that would resist and try to escape, burning everything ruthlessly, indiscriminately, and fully

These figures infuse life in the ruins of Khajuraho all of them throbbing, breathing and bustling together in loving impulse, in amorous aura, and in lust for life They make the whole atmosphere sway in the rhythm of life, in the ecstasy of love, and in the beatitude of heavenly bliss They sport in love, they sway in joy and sorrow, anger and violence , and they also portray the emotions of calmness, restiveness, composure, perplexity, and placidity They are engaged in an eternal tryst In them we find an allurement of the panoramic filigree of sensuous forms , delicate, passionate, and sensitive beings —these females—like tidal upsurge, like fire of the forest, and like tempest of the desert infuse in the human souls the peace, the serenity and tranquility of the other world they seem to glorify the most human traits with unceasing quest of bliss, of truth of God Revealed through these figures are the finest and tenderest moments of human life.

These passionate individuals hang in trance—in reverie—either of successful or of fruitless tryst The females here are all love-lorn and are in the prime of their youth They are the dwellers of ether the intermediary world—the belt of transition from where they have descended to the alluring world below and have been denied their return for the sin of behaving like humans

These graceful and semidivine females who are engaged in activities befitting worldly women can be classified as

(1) Nayikas, or Apsaras
(2) Shalbhanjikas
(3) Surasundaris

1 The Nayikas or Apsaras are those which pose in various erotic and suggestive attitudes or postures and those who look love-sick, excited and emotionally disturbed The suggestive and symbolic

gestures of these figures create lucious and fragrant sensuousness, the form and rhythm of which heighten the delicacy, the charm, and the beauty of their bodies

Apsaras "arose out of the waters of the Milky Ocean, when the water (*ap*) was churned beautiful women appeared from its essence (*rasa*) These are called the essence of the waters (Apsaras)"[3] Further that, "Since no one married them they became public women"[4]

Now considering these Apsaras as Nayikas we shall discuss the scope in which different categories of the individual female figures could be discussed categorically

Natya Shastra of Bharat gives eight fold classification of the Nayikas as follows (1) a heroine is Vasakasajja, when she is dressed to receive her lover , (2) Virahotkanthita, when she is distressed at his absence , (3) Svadhinapatika, if her lover always sits by her side with pleasure and is under her subjection , (4) Kalahantarita, when she having repulsed her lover out of indignation, suffers remorse , (5) Khandita, when she is afflicted with agony on account of the absence of her lover, who has gone to meet another woman , (6) Vipralabdha, when she does not find him at the appointed place , (7) Proshitabhartrika, when her lover is away in a distant land on business , and (8) Abhisarika, when she, lovesick and having renounced all modesty and bashfulness, goes to meet her lover[5]

The later works on rhetoric like *Sahitya Darpana* have repeated these states of the Nayikas In *Rasakusumakar*[6] two more names have been added to the previous list

(1) Pravatsyatpatika
(2) Agatapatika

The sculptures of Nayikas of Khajuraho can be grouped in the similar states each having a few variations in actions and moods Since our Nayikas in this category are love-lorn individuals, the state of Svadhinabhartrika, in which the lover remains by her side, does not fit in The remaining states in which the Nayikas are seen may include figures as following

1 *Vasakasajja*
   (a) She is tying her hair in joyous mood
   (b) She is tying her waistband to complete her dress
   (c) She is holding a garland to greet her lover
   (d) She stands fully dressed expecting her lover any time

2 *Virahotkanthita*

(a) She is getting restless and worried at the absence of her lover

The other variations of the love-lorn Nayikas are

(a) Reading letter which she has received from her lover
(b) Writing letter to her lover
(c) Passionately pressing her breasts
(d) Holding or tying her dress after the departure of her lover with whom she had made love
(e) Standing in remnescent mood remembering the tender and pleasant moments that she had spent with her lover
(f) She is shown troubled with the mounting passion which according to Anangrang is in different parts of the body of the heroine on different days of moonlit nights or dark nights The intensity of passion has been translated into symbols Four much common symbols used by the artist to depict the state of these Nayikas are (i) tapping and patting, (ii) pinching and scratching, (iii) scorpion mounting on leg, (iv) monkey mounting on leg

3 *Kalahantarita*

(a) Weeping with eyes and nose having become loose on account of which she is seen wiping her nose

4 *Khandita*

(a) Crying bitterly with her palms over her eyes

5. *Vipralabdha*

(a) She is restless and sad when she does not find the lover at the appointed place

6 *Prositbhartrika*

(a) She is sad with dejected look in her eyes and is scantily dressed

7 *Abhisarika*

(a) Fully dressed she is seen proceeding to meet her lover She looks back fearfully if her movement has been noticed by anyone Amaru has ably observed the situation and says that You're off to meet your lover in some haste, with tinkling necklaces and bangles, a merry girdle clinking at your waist, while at each step an anklet jangles

(You glance around in constant trepidation,
Fearful of coming under observation)[7]

The same situation is described by Bhartrihari who says that, "In pitch dark night, amidst thundering and heavy downpour a lady is proceeding to meet her lover. She is pleased to find her path in the golden flash of the lightning but at the same time is worried for being revealed in such state"[8] Amaru is in conversation with one Abhisarika who on questioning

"Where are you going in the dead of night ?"
"To meet my lover who is life and death to me"
And when asked—
"And are you not afraid to walk alone ?"
She retorts
"How can I be alone ? Love keeps me company"[9]

(b) Other attitudes in which the signs of Abhisarika may be discovered are the attitudes showing the Nayika preparing herself for the tryst with her lover
  (i) Wringing her hair after bath
  (ii) Applying colyrium (Kajal) in the eyes
  Her eyes painted with colyrium
  She "with the triumph of a modest glance
  Can lead the very gods a merry dance"[10]
  (iii) Applying surma (black powder) in the eyes
  (iv) Applying Vermillion (Kumkum) on the forehead
  (v) Looking in mirror
  (vi) Applying Lac dye (Alta) on the heel of her foot
  (vii) Extricating thorn from the sole of her foot
(c) Fondling a child shown either on her waist or trying to climb her leg
(d) With a pitcher in one hand

1 Playing with a ball held in one hand

2 Shalbhanjikas are associated in one way or other with a tree motif and are placed as bracket figures on the abacus of pillars that support the entablature of the *mandapa* Mostly the Abhisarika state of the Nayika has been portrayed in which she is shown

(a) Wringing her hair after a bath The interesting feature of this motif is a swan sitting at her feet with its open beak turned upward in which trickles the ambrosial water which is as intoxicating as the glances, breath, touch or kiss of a damsel The bath indicates to the asexual state of the woman

Table showing various seats of passion in heroine

"Passion resides in the women's right side during the Shukla Paksha The reverse is the case on the dark fortnight "[11]

Shukla Paksha		*Krishna Paksha*	
Day	*Place*	*Place*	*Day*
15	Head & Hair	Head & Hair	1
14	Right eye	Left eye	2
13	Lower lip	Upper lip	3
12	Right cheek	Left cheek	4
11	Throat	Throat	5
10	Side	Side	6
9	Breasts	Breasts	7
8	All bossom	All bossom	8
7	Navel	Navel	9
6	Nates	Nates	10
5	Yoni	Yoni	11
4	Knee	Knee	12
3	Calf of leg	Calf of leg	13
2	Foot	Foot	14
1	Big toe	Big toe	15

(b) Looking in mirror This lady is probably bewitched at her own beauty , or she imagines of looking at her lover , or she remembers the love , or the sport in which her lover has left some teeth marks on her lips and cheeks

(c) Going to temple—the appointed place—where she expects to meet her lover

(d) Extricating a thoin from the sole of her foot Monkeys sitting on the tree

(e) Waiting for her lover under a mango tree and fondling a deer

(f) Applying vermillion mark on her forehead

(g) Fondling a child

(h) Playing with a ball Her back towaids the viewer, she is throwing the ball with right hand raised above the head The left hand on her breast In *Dashakumaracharitam* —Princess Kandukavati shows her skill of dance with a ball 'Kanduka Nritya' in the temple of goddess Vindhyavasini

Here she is supposed to select a husband for herself The various styles[12] described for treating the ball are

(i) Churnapada
(ii) Dashapada Chankramanarupa
(iii) Panchabindu (Panchavartaprahara)
(iv) Gomutrika

"She strikes the ball,
angered that it can dare
To match her breasts,
her lotus thinks, and lies
Prostrate and frightened,
fallen from her hair,
Beseeching the forgiveness
of her eyes "[13]

Parrot, the love bird of India, sitting on the back of the palm of one hand and a mango branch laden with mangoes held by the other

3 Surasundaris are the females who sing, dance and allure with their charm They are generally located in the upper most tier of sculptures on the temple walls and occassionally among the two other kinds of Nayikas The common state in which they are exhibited are

(a) Playing the flute
(b) Playing *vina* or *ektara*
(c) Tying *ghunghuru* or *payal* before performing a dance
(d) Dancing
(e) Spoiling her make up and taking out the jewellery she had put on , with angry look and dejected mood

The Nayikas are the symbols of submission, prayer, expectancy, devotion and sincerity They prepare themselves physically their minds burning with the fever of love, they wait at an appointed place until either the lover appears or fails to show up, and they suffer the pangs of passionate love with the desire to meet their lover

She is glorified in this act of preparing herself for 'giving of herself' to taste the joy of the sacrifice of self

The Nayika is on the practical side of the embodiment of 'physical awareness' "but on a different plane there is our spiritual and metaphysical identity "[14]

The longing for sex and appeasement of sex by these Nayikas with the fervour of devoted single-mindedness are like the approach of a devotee to his God, who enters the temple with piety and prayer The intensity of love shown by these damsels is beyond the reach of

human experience , it is divine, sublimated love The humans become the medium, and a kind of new life emerges from the stillness of reverie and catches unimaginably It is the pilgrimage to salvation where the language of love does not belong to human language, where human body does not touch the flesh of love

(b) AMOROUS COUPLE (MITHUNAS)

The *mithuna* of the loving couples in the sculptures of Khajuraho temples display various erotic postures They express their desire in most simple but striking manner The males and the females both of them breath the same intoxicating air—saturated with the fragrance of love and passion The ardour of love and sex is maddening , the streams of human lust rush in search of the ocean of fulfilment The Nayikas are the unhappy souls who crave for the tender embrace and kisses of their lovers, who wish their men to possess them completely, and play the game of love until they achieve orgasm The males are the very much sought after persons who soon begin to react to the lustful entreaty of the females They passionately indulge in the love-play and sex-act

This search of the male, Purusha bythe female, Prakriti probably represents the aspert of creation in the Nature, which goes on unendingly The hide and seek of the two principles go on for ever This romantic fervour, the sex act, has been symbolised by the craving of the two to achieve an impersonal union with the infinite

Couples can be conveniently placed in four groups, viz

(1) The Inducement
(2) The Insinuation
(3) The Submission
(4) The Languor

1 *The Inducement*

In which the female tries to attract the male by making several erotic gestures and actions The passion seems to float in the eyes of the female She stares the male with fixed gaze and charming expression Once the female is charged with passion and desire how long man would restrain the temptation and the insinuation "Man can keep himself righteous, keep his senses in control and keep his shame and modesty intact till he is injured by the arrows of the eyes of the damsel "[15] When the man surrenders and starts loving the woman, "she will have no hesitation in permitting him to scrutinize the most intimate details of her body "[16] One

example from Chitragupta temple may be taken to illustrate this type On the northern facade a finely dressed couple stands out of which the female is entreating the male who has turned his back to her Two very interesting postures of the kind are available on the walls of Duladeo temple On the western wall stands a fully dressed couple, the female is holding the beard of the male who is standing expressionless, but pushing away the female On the northern wall an unmoved ascetic playing *kartala*, held in both hands is seen totally disregarding the entreating female Both are finely dressed

2 *The Insinuation*

In which the female tries all her skill and wins the male Once she sets forth on a mission passionately driven by love even the Creator can not distract her [17] The stages of love-play preceding the union according to *Kamasutra*[18] are

(i) embracing
(ii) kissing
(iii) marking with nails
(iv) marking with teeth

The sculptures in Khajuraho temples show the first three stages

(i) embracing There are two types of embracing First which are practised before the union and second are those which are used during the sex act

First[19] (a) Sprishtaka (slight contact embrace)
(b) Viddhaka (breast-pressing embrace)
(c) Udghrishtaka (rubbing embrace)
(d) Piditaka (forceful rubbing embrace)

Second[20] (a) Lata veshtitaka (twining like a creeper)
(b) Vrikshadhirudhakam (climbing like a tree)
(c) Tilatandulaka (the seed-rice mixture embrace)
(d) Kshiranira (the milk and water embrace)

We find many examples of the eight kinds of embraces mentioned above and some of these are extremely beautiful pieces of plastic art

The next stage in the love-play is,

(ii) kissing There are certain places which are kissed during the love-play

According to *Kamasutra* these are

"The forehead, hair, the eyes, the man's chest, the woman's bosom, the upper lip and the inside of the mouth "[21]

Three kinds of kisses are mentioned for the maidens[22]

(a) Nimitaka or the nominal kiss

(b) Sfuritaka or the throbbing kiss
(c) Ghattitaka or the touching kiss
The four kinds for the accustomed ones [23]
(a) Sama or the straight kiss
(b) Tiryaga or the standing kiss
(c) Udbhranta or the turned kiss
(d) Avapiditaka or the pressing kiss
The fifth in this category is
(e) Akrishta or holding the lips of the heroine by first finger and the thumb and kissing
Kiss of the different intensities[24] are mentioned as
(1) Sama or balanced kiss
(2) Pidita or forcible kiss
(3) Anchita or lightly touching kiss
(4) Mridu or gentle or affectionate kiss

Bhartrihari says that, "Because the women's talk is ambrosial and heart full of poison the mouth is kissed and the breasts punished by fists "[25]

The women of Khajuraho sculptures are the ones who are well-versed in the art of love-making They use the most intimate type of kisses The artist had the only choice of making standing figures, hence the embraces and kisses used in the sculptures are, Sprihaka, Viddhaka, Udghrishtaka, Piditaka, Lata Veshtitaka, Vrikshadhirudhaka, and Kshiranira

The kinds of kisses which can be compared with the similar actions of the sculpted figures are Nimitaka, Sfuritaka, Ghattitaka, Sama, Tiryaga, Udbhranta and Avapiditaka

3 *The Submission*

The female succeeds in winning the love of the resisting uninterested and continent male, who is passive and unwielding to her entreaty He responds to the continued efforts of the female who had used all the weapons in her possession—like embrace, kisses, and had spoken 'sweet nothings' to him

For her he is "the demon of her dreams, the maker and slayer of her body" When he is unable to resist the provocation, inciting fire of passion, and the tender touch he submits and begins to play the game of love Though the man here is induced to love-act, yet he remains grave sterile and passive even in the height of the sex-act

The medium here is stone and the figures are standing, hence many

postures described in the *sastras* could not be made In the following description some very outstanding postures are being described

(i) Samputaka or the clasping attitude, when, during actual congress the legs of both the lovers are straightened and stretched[26]

(ii) Piditaka or the pressing position, when the woman after congress through the clasping position brings her thighs as close as possible and presses them against each other[27]

(iii) Bhugnaka or the rising attitude, when, the woman holds up both her thighs[28]

(iv) Jrimbhitaka or the yawning position when the man holds up her legs and rests them on his shoulders[29]

(v) Venudaritaka or the splitting of the bamboo position, when one of her legs is stretched and the other is kept resting on the man's shoulder[30]

(vi) Sthitarata or the standing attitude, when, the man and the woman support themselves against each other or against a wall or a pillar and engage in congress[31]

(vii) Avalambitaka or the suspended congress, when, the woman embraces the man who is standing against a wall, by encircling his neck with her hands, and supports herself on both his hands, clasps his thighs with hers and places her feet against the wall[32]

(viii) Dhenuka or the bovine attitude, when, a woman bends down to stand on her feet and hands like a bovine, and the man, twining his arms firmly around her and assuming stance of a beast mounts her as if he were a bull and effects penial entry from behind[33]

The whole atmosphere of love has an eternal character of inducement, insinuation, and submission The woman looks impelled to give herself to him with powerful and exquisite force desiring pleasure The man looks as if bathing in the reflected glory of lust and desire

The man is not blinded even for a moment by her body keeping himself unattached and composed and without being shy or sentimental or clumsy offers all that she desires, seeks or demands This unending sexual enigma of two opposite characters seems to unite in an unending kiss, in deep intimate embrace and in penetrating bliss The wild approach of the passionate woman gives the notion of her having achieved the long cherished dream and she does not seem to think of separation from her lover, as she lovingly passionately and fiercely embraces the man as if she would dissolve herself in her person Their embrace sometimes is so intensive and deep that the two bodies seem to be fused by the ardour of one another The female with her sincere impulse and unassuming submission desires

him to reciprocate her action. Reciprocate he must. He, ultimately, responds, but only physically in most impassioned, motionless, and quiet manner He possesses her, however, in the darkest and most secret depths of her being, his possession of her being complete and profound so as to arouse in her the sensation of sincere and desirous possession evermore, everlasting and eternal

It is the woman who finds in him a means of gratifying the burning passion in her, she draws him to fall from ideals and close his eyes from the path of virtue, of piety, and of salvation

Both male and female surrender to the prowess of lust, passion, and sex They surrender, because, "To surrender, is to relax In the patterns of love, as in sleep, the body renounces its tensions" [34] But there is a difference in the surrendering of the man and the woman The former enjoys the pleasures of sex without becoming a party to the sex-act He helps the woman to achieve the pleasure of sex, to enjoy every moment and every action of the act

4 *The languor*

'The acme of pleasure' in the sex-act has been depicted with detail, finesse and in most ingenuous manner It may be observed in many cases in which the couple stands listlessly in loving embrace There is charming smile and contentment reigning over the physiognomy

(c) AMOROUS ASSEMBLIES

Apart from the amorous couples there are a few panels prominently displaying the orgy of a group of people who gratify their sexual desire in a very peculiar manner There are, however, smaller panels and friezes that adorn the temple walls which have scenes, some of them are most imaginative These scenes are full of persons who like erotomaniacs cross the borders of decency—not that they do this intentionally but because in the heat of passion they adopt unnatural means to pacify their lust for sex Such scenes can, if taken individually, be labeled as obscene

The following are the situations in which a man meets more than one woman in sexual congress turn by turn

1 Sanghataka or the Double Performance Attitude when a man unites with two women of a mixed nature and who love him equally [35] Kokkoka describes the method saying that "The man unites with one woman and uses his hand for the others" [36]

2 Goyuthika or the Cowherd Action When a man unites with more than two woman [37]

On the north wall of Lakshmana temple there is a panel in the uppermost tier placed in the middle of the row

The Kandariya Mahadeo temple has one panel in each of the three tiers on the north and south walls

We find in some temples, examples of such union in which a woman meets in coitus with more than one man, this custom prevailed in Kamrupa-(Assam) during the days of Vatsyayana [38] On the southern wall of the Jagadambi temple an unique composition is located in which a naked woman is flanked by two naked men she seems much more in love with the man on her right whom she has taken in embrace with her right hand The other man is trying to draw the female towards him by pulling her hair

There are many examples contrary to the description given above in one of which a man is being entreated by two women to gratify their passion and sexual desire, in another, a man is shown more inclined to a woman and thus the other woman is jealous of her, yet in another, a man holds the two women by his arms in embrace, one of whom is fully dressed and the dress of the other is slipping down

The representation of various emotions and postures used to express the states of the Nayikas and the Amorous couples are based on the following "basic states of consciousness" viz , love, merriment, grief, anger, effort, repulsion and surprise The postures of the Nayakas and Nayikas have been sculpted accordingly to assist the expression of emotions in the physiognomy The postures that have been used here are—

According to *Vishnudharmottara*

1 Rijvagata
2 Sachikrita Sariya
3 Ardhavilochana
4 Parshvagata
5 Paravritta
6 Prishthagata
7. Parivritta
8. Samanata
9. Madhyardha
10 Ardhardha
11 Sachikritamukh
12 Nata
13 Gandaparavritta
14 Ullepa
15 Chalita
16. Uttana
17 Valita

According to *Samarangana Sutradhara*

1 Alidham
2 Pratyalidham
3 Nrityasana

The erotic figures have been given three fold inflexion to render the emotional frenzy triple charm.

(d) DIVINE AMOURS

Here sex is portrayed in all its technical vividness and vitality in individual's originality and warmth and in its most intimate and personal aspect But the divinities also have been included in the scheme with their own gravity, godliness and transcendent expression The artist appears to have risen from the stupefying reverie of the lust for sex to restrain himself from portraying the divinities in the same frenzy in which he had created the humans

The majority of these divine couples are on the embellishment of Parshvanatha temple These are incorporated in the scheme of passionate Nayikas flanking them on the panels on both the sides and with flying Gandharvas in the upper band

These comprise the figures of Lakshmi-Narayana, Revati-Balarama and Parvati-Shiva on the southern wall , Rati-Kama, and Sridhara on the western wall , Sita-Rama, Parvati-Shiva, and Savitri-Brahma on the northern wall

A few examples of the divine couples are available in the niches of the inner walls of the *mandapa* of Kandariya Mahadeva These niches have Parvati-Shiva images in them Parvati-Shiva images are also present in the sculptured band of northern, western and southern wall of Chitragupta temple, of which the panel on the northern wall depicts the betrothal of Shiva with Parvati In the niches of *mandapa* of the Vishvanatha temple we have a few figures of divine couples—on the western wall Parvati-Shiva and on the northern wall we have the Shiva Androgynous i e , Ardhanarishvara. In niches on the outer walls of Vamana temple we find Parvati-Shiva on the southern wall and Parvati-Shiva Panigrahana or betrothal on the western wall

These sculptures of divine couples are the examples of erotic sculptures Because of the loving attitude of the goddess who clings to the body of the god placing one of her hand on his shoulder and is herself held by the god in graceful embracing posture Often the palm of the left hand of the god reaches below the armpit of the goddess where his fingers receive the weight of her left breast She looks up at him as if she has nothing else to see and gazes at him in a most loving manner

The divinities personify gravity, composure and divineness and exhibit sensuality of a very high level In the male divinities have

been incorporated all the ideals and standards of masculine beauty conceived by the artist So also in the female divinities all similes and characters of delicate objects were drawn upon

The images of the divine couple "exhibit the majesty and dignity of the male figure and the soft allurement of the charming female figure, Conjugal bliss is here transmitted into a spiritual ecstasy welded together in a single reverberating whole[39]"

"This consecreation of the flesh was, indeed, the essence of Tantric ritual[40]" This spiritual discipline could be achieved by relinquishing the ego and forgetting the self to give way to the unqualified, undefined and yet all-pervasive principle to dominate the human mind , to let the state of transcendent love occupy the vaccum created by the diminishing ego Love opens for us the possibility of freedom from bondage, it elevates us from the basely plane to higher plane We begin to know the truth—the reality, we love to know and to know is to advance towards God—towards the realization of God We make our hearts the receptacle of the bliss that emanates from the state of love We become wise—we find in us energy that leads us to disciplined state—to the state of much more energy that may produce in us heavenly transcendence

Thus, when the mind is free from the obsession of sex and is filled with the fragrance of love even in the state of profound sensuousness, the desire or the emotion of sexual pleasure would not trouble the mind Sexual union, however, is taken symbolically to mean an union of two opposite principles Through sexual union the act of procreation is fulfilled, but the foremost situation arrived in the union is the feeling of oneness When the two members become fully engrossed in the union they forget all about their ownself and thus there remains no difference between them Moreover, as we understand, the goddess is an extension of the energy of god and, therefore, the union of the two shall mean the union between self and self. "The delicate caressing of the breast expresses the rhythms and movements of the life force, so potently symbolized in the forceful, aggressive thrust of the breasts , the moment of respite from the rhythms of its eternal pressures so tenderly described in the gentle support which the hand of Vishnu offers the breast of Lakshmi "[41]

However divine and godly, these figures of gods and goddesses would appear as the sensuality and love are the main features that emanate from the expressions of the goddess and to a little extent of the god In the *mithuna* of Shiva and Parvati "The subdued smile of Shiva, shows the happiness of one who has transcended

pleasure and pain and yet is joyous. Parvati glows with impatient ardour The eagerness of her surrender sublimated by consuming love is on her face This Parvati is dominated by a chaste sensuousness which sweetness has transformed into something eternally feminine and divinely beautiful "[42]

Thus the image of a divine couple, that may express the emotion of transcendent love and may symbolise the cosmic union of the two opposite principles' must be taken as erotic—after all the function of creation is symbolised may it be through the union of self with self

(e) EROTOMANIACS

Sculptures which show a kind of people who take part in the sex-orgy with great enthusiasm and craze of a maniac or even a pervert are those 'lovers of the body' that invent and act according to sex-impulse Their reaction is instantaneous—they do not wait to think about the manner in which they should respond, they act without any afterthought

We do not find anywhere reference to the kind of sexual behaviour that these 'coitus cravers' present The artist was left to create forms either of his own fascination or as suggested by his employer

The carnality exhibited by these persons is of a rare kind which amuses as well as surprises us We experience shame, embarassment and dislike, the kind of which is experienced by some of the associates incorporated in the orgiastic assemblies They cover their eyes with the palms, or feel enraged and humiliated like the one who is shown holding a man by hair and fiercely reproaching him for having adopted unnatural and aberrant method of sexual intercourse We may wonder at the sex-behaviour of our ancestors if at all these represent their mode of life

The Lakshmana, the Kandariya, the Vishvanatha and the Duladeo temples, have good examples of the perverts who show no regard for the ethical or sacramental aspect of the sex-act The type of sex-orgy presented in some of these works forces us to reconstitute, rebuild and remould theories and the causes for illustrating sex-behaviour which may be formed as abominable, unhealthy and banal eroticism When taken possession of carnal desires, all men and women act alike, may they be the simple rural folks, or the elite of the society, or the learned, or the workmen, businessmen, or even soldiers who have been considered to be sex-hungry in all periods of history

In these illustrations of 'postures of pleasure, the men and women invent humorous, unprincipled and acrobatic postures indulging in the perverted forms of sex-act like 'fellatio and cunnilinctus' They act in frivolous, unwieldy and unusual manner and do not hesitate for a single while in seeking sexual congress even with animals, they are not at all hesitant in adopting unnatural means to satisfy their sex urge

Here are a few examples of the sodomy of these hedonists who engage in 'loosest' forms of matings apropos the 'sublimest'

On the southern wall of the platform of the Lakshmana temple we find a long panel comprising examples of most basal sodomy that could ever be conceived The first scene in the panel is of a couple in the Dhenuka or the bovine attitude, the next one is an example of cunnilinctus and shows a man standing with both of his hands raised up in pleasure and has a wine jar slung on one arm, a female sitting cross legged on ground for the act of fellatio In the third is a standing couple The bearded male is checking the female who wishes to hold his genital The fourth scene is an example of mixoscopia A couple is seen on a bed , the woman is lying on her back her head on the leg side of the bed while the man facing the head side of the bed is standing near her chest with one foot on either side held tight in the arms of the woman who has raised her legs to go up on the back of the man who bends low and forward making an attempt to lift the woman a little upwards In doing so they perform cunnilinctus and fellatio An amused attendant stands on the headside

A smaller replica of the scene can be seen on the southern wall in a narrow frieze encircling the body of the temple Next scene is of the bovine attitude The sixth one shows three men in a wine making session Two of these are crushing, probably grapes, in an hour-glass shaped drum, 'okhali', with long thrashers and the third man sitting on the ground does the same with a smaller drum In the seventh is an example of the reversed attitude The male lies on his back on a bed his stretched legs are held up by the woman who stands facing towards the feet of the man and her own feet planted at his pelvis The woman bends low to copulate in this unusual posture An attendant is standing behind the head of the lying male and massages his hair with the help of his urine Two attendents watch this scene the fun of which is unbearable for one of them who covers his eyes by his palms while the other laughs heartily The eighth scene in which the woman is in an acrobatic posture and

stands on her head She is given support by the male by holding her legs which fly in opposite directions A panal depicting Kakila can be seen on the northern wall of the Duladeo temple in which the female turns turtle 'like scorpion' and rests herself on only one arm because by the other she helps herself to fellatio The man holds her raised legs and places them on his shoulders By doing so he performs cunnilinctus The variety of fellatio and cunnilinctus could not be shown in a better acrobatic posture The ninth is again an example of mixoscopia in which the woman gratifies two men—by fellatio in case of the man standing before him and by bending to do this providing the bovine attitude to the man standing behind her An attendant on the far side turns his head away from the sight of the scene and covers his eyes Another such scene can be seen in a narrow band on the Vishvanatha temple The next scene shows a man holding a woman up on her hands and he is attempting coitus, while the woman tries to support herself on his shoulders , she clasps his neck and kisses him violently A fine example of the similar posture can be seen on the western wall of the Duladeo temple The eleventh scene is of a couple in Purushayita or the Reversed attitude There is now the 'mixoscopia zoophilia' a man and a mare This great fun amuses many of his friends one of whom shouts at others to come and see what their friend was attempting, but one other covers his face to restrict the sight of this unnatural act A rare example of bestialism is of the coitus sought by the bovine woman from dog is seen on the wall of the platform Another is in the narrow frieze of the Lakshmana temple

In this narrow band of sculptured frieze we find on the western wall a woman reclining on a bed with stretched legs and she pulls a man by holding his hair and forces him to cunnilinctus On the southern wall a female is being forced by a bearded man to fellatio In a longer piece are shown three men, two of which force a woman each to surrender to their vile passion The third man is busy in love-play with a woman One worried woman awaits her turn To the right of this scene there are dancers and singers and to the left are two women talking Continued on the far left is a flying figure of Kamadeva shooting from his bow the arrows poisoned with passion

The physical force applied in making the women surrender to the vile desires of men shows that the behaviour of the sex-crazy people or even the idea of adopting mixoscopia was not acceptable to the general masses or atleast to most of the people of the period Drink-

ing too was not preferred by some as is evident from a small panel from the narrow band of the Vishvanatha temple in which three men are engaged in a drinking bout An attendant is busy filling the cup for a man while the other two force the fourth, a resisting man, to join them

There are a few figures of attendants who have been shown as the lovers of fellatio and cunnilinctus They are shown in large size panels on the northern wall of Lakshmana temple Dwarf size figures of both male and female are shown busy in licking the secretion that glides down the legs or trickles from genitals—they do not actually apply their mouths to the sex-organs. This shows that the couples actually reach the orgasm and achieve the state of joy that results after the culmination of sex-act The contention that the 'release of semen' does not take place since the sex-act was a form of *sadhana* and "If the discharge occurs the entire *sadhana* will go waste"[43] cannot be agreed upon The joy of sex-act no doubt can be experienced during the act but the joy after the sex-act, i e, 'release of semen' is many times more than the former One more point may be mentioned here that there are certain compositions in which the male as well as the female and the attendants are seen standing listlessly in the state of languor caused after the sex-act The male genital is not erect and the female has turned away, although she clings to the body of the man and glances at him affectionately There seems no such efforts which could be termed as "normal precaution against possible pregnancy"[44] There are symbolic representations declaring the fact that the woman has conceived and in many instances she is fondling a child. The joy experienced by both the male and female is due to the attainment of motherhood by the female

(f) ATTENDANTS AND ASSOCIATES

A very significant aspect of this erotic enigma is of the dwarf size figures who either help the Nayika while she prepares herself for the tryst or they offer physical support to the couple who strike an unusual posture or they engage in some funny act which could be termed as obscene These are attendants and associates the kind of whom we find in many ancient literary works

The people from lower section of the society in different trades and professions who can be friends and suitable to help in love-affairs according to Kamasutra are

"Washerman, barber, florist, perfumer, wineseller, goldsmith,

mendicant, cowherd, betal-seller, *pithamarda* (tutor of fashion), *vita* (a confidant of couctesans and fashionable woman), and *vidushaka* and their wives who should be smart enough are helpful and can prove as successful intermediaries "[45]

"A person who is friendly with both the man and the woman can work as a messenger "[46]

The 'go-betweens', messengers or pleasure-companions for male and female differ in many respects, and thus have different kinds of duties to perform A man who should be selected to perform the duties of a go-between should possess the following qualities

"He should be able to adapt himself according to circumstances, be very courageous, be able to read the mind through the face, not loose heart easily, be quite capable of drawing forth secrets quickly, be fully conversant with the exigencies of time and place and act accordingly to succeed in his job, be quite capable of reaching conclusions quickly when in doubt, and be quite capable of acting quickly on his or her decisions "[47]

The most common names out of the male go-betweens are of Pithamarda, Vita and Vidushaka The qualifications of these three according to Vatsyayana are thus

The Pithamarda "has no encumbrances, is well-versed in different arts, and is competent to impart useful instructions to the courtesans whereby he earns his livelihood"

The Vita "is one who has been rich in the past, whose wife is still living, who is meritorious, and who commands respect in the society of the courtesans and the citizens whom he serves for his sustenance"

The Vidushaka "is one who is not proficient in any branch of knowledge but knows how to make others laugh and who works as a minister between the courtesans and the citizens in uniting them or estranging them from each other" [48]

After a lady has learnt the various aspects of love, she should confide her love to her friends and employ some one to act as a messenger, or to give her proper advise or to console her in distress The women who perform these duties for their mistress, a noble-woman or a friend, have been known as Sakhis and Dutis The four important duties of the go-between (Duti) are Sanghattana, Viraha-nivedana, Sandesha-kathana and Patrika-dana.

We find mention of the different types of attendents in many literary as well as technical works

The following account may help in this respect

(a) Bharata, *Natya Shastra*

1 Duti Duti, Prativeshya, Sakhi, Dasi, Kumari, Darushilpika, Dhatri, Pakhandini, Ikshanika, Kathani, Lingini, Rangopajivana

(b) Rudrata, *Kavyalankara*

1 Narmasachiva Pithamarda, Vita, Vidushaka

(c) Rudrabhatta, *Shringara-Tilaka*

1 Narmasachiva Pithamarda, Vita, Vidushaka

2 Sakhi Karu, Dasi, Nati, Dhatri, Prativeshya, Shilpini, Bala, Pravrajita

(d) Dhananjaya, *Dasharupaka*

1 Sahayaka Pithamarda, Vita, Vidushaka

2 Duti Dasi, Sakhi, Karu, Dhatreyi, Prativeshika, Lingini, Shilpini, Svayam

(e) Bhoja, *Saraswati-Kanthabharana*

1 Hina-patra Pithamarda, Vidushaka, Vita, Cheta, Rataka

2 Sakhi Sahaja, Purvaja, Agantuh

(f) Sharadatanyya, *Bhava-Prakasha*

1 Narmasachiva Pithamarda, Vita, Vidushaka

2 Duti Pashandini, Prativeshya, Sakhi, Rangopajivani, Dhatreyika, Prekshanika

(g) Bhanudatta, *Rasa-Manjari*

1 Narmasachiva Pithamarda, Vita, Cheta, Vidushaka

2 Sakhi Duti, Sakhi

(h) Vidyanatha, *Prataparudra-Yashobhushana*

1 Sahaya Pithamarda, Vita, Cheta, Vidushaka

2 Sahaya Duti, Dasi, Sakhi, Karu, Dhatreyi, Prativeshini, Lingini, Shilpini, Sva

(i) Singa-Bhupala, *Rasarnava-Sudahkara*

1 Sahaya Pithamarda, Vita, Cheta, Vidushaka

2 Duti Sakhi, Cheti, Lingini, Prativeshini, Dhatreyi, Shilpakari, Kumari, Kathini, Karu, Viprashnika

(j) Vagbhatta II, *Kavyanushasana*

1 Anuchara Narmasachiva, Pithamarda, Vita, Vidushaka

2 Duti Pravrajita, Dhatreyika, Hinastri, Dasi.

(k) Vishvanatha, *Sahitya-Darpana*

1 Sahaya Vita, Cheta, Vidushaka

2. Duti . Sakhi, Nati, Dasi, Dhatreyi, Prativeshini, Bala, Pravrajita, Karu, Shilpini, Svayam

The followıng are the seven dutıes of the Sakhı

1 Vınoda or Parıhasa (to make humour)
2 Mandana (to adorn)
3 Shıksha (to advıse)
4 Upalambha (to complaın wıth sarcasm)
5 Prasadana (to pacıfy)
6 Sangama (to unıte), and
7 Vırahavasa (to console at the tıme of separatıon)"[49]

In *Kaıpuramanjarı* we find the male associates ın Vıdushaka named Kapınjala, and the female associates ın Sakhıs named Vıchakshana and Kurangıka and Dası named Sarangıka, Chetı, and Charcharı the dancers The Vıdushaka however, has mentıoned names of five attendants whose duty ıs to fan and who are known as Anangasena, Kalıngasena, Kamasena, Vasantsena and Vıbhramasena

"Fıve attendants, who are Saırındhrıs, ı e , who remaın ın the personal care of the lady and named as Anangalekha, Chıtıalekha, Chandralekha, Mrıgankalekha, and Vıbhramalekha wıth bows and arrows along wıth a thousand bow-shooters, have been placed on the southern sıde

"Seven attendants, whose orıgınal duty ıs to carry plates of betels and known as Kundamala, Chandanamala, Kuvalayamala, Kanchanamala, Vakulamala, Mangalamala, and Manıkyamala wıth sharp poınted spears and a thousand forces also wıth spears, have been deputed on the western sıde

"Fıve attendants, who generally bathe the lady, named as Anangakelı, Pushkarakelı, Kandarpakelı, Sundarakelı, and Utpalakelı wıth sword and shıeld assısted wıth a thousand swordsman, have been deputed on the northern sıde

"Over and above all these five attendants, whose duty ıs to hold golden staff and chant selected verses and are named as Madıravatı, Kelıvatı, Kallolavatı, Tarangavatı, and Anangavatı, have been made commanders of these armed forces "[50]

Accordıng to *Kamasutra* there are eıght kınds of messengers

1 The Ambassador (Nıshıshtartha) "effects a meetıng between the lovers "
2 The Lımıted Ambassador (Parımıtartha) "offers lımıted help to effect a meetıng between the lovers "
3 The Post-Carrıer Messenger (Patraharı) "Carrıes letters and verbal messages "
4 The Self-Messenger (Svayam-dutı) "becomes herself her own messenger to wın the lover "

5 The Stupid Messenger (Moorha-duti) is the wife who "acts unwillingly as a stupid messenger between her husband and his beloved"
6 The Wife Messenger (Bharya-duti) "is the wife who is sent as a messenger by her own husband to his beloved"
7 The Silent Messenger (Mook-duti) "is a young maid ignorant of acts of secret love"
8 The Fortuitous Messenger (Veta-duti) "has nothing to do with the love between the lover and his beloved She has no idea of their love business"[51]

The other persons who could be employed as messenger are, "a widow, a female astrologer, a female attendant, a female mendicant and a female artist"[52]

In the sculptures of Khajuraho a rich variety of associates, attendants and go-betweens who perform such duties as are assigned to them by their masters or they function in their own way are shown We find these associates mostly with the single erotic figures of the females, who are the only ones here that are taken possession of passion and need the help of their attendants to effect a meeting between their lovers, with erotic couples who either make love or are engaged in sex-acts, or erotic assemblies in which these associates act as lunatics They not only enjoy the fun created by their masters but also attempt to seek sensual pleasures themselves They give a helping hand to their friends in successfully building an acrobatic posture They, however, feel ashamed of what their friends are attempting at, at times they too exhibit ingenuity in creating fun Beyond all the freedom taken by them they are supposed to amuse their noble friends and attempt to fulfil their erotic desires

A list given below will show the general purpose for which these attendants and associateds keep company of the heroes or the heroines

(a) MALE ATTENDANTS

1 Holding a sort of vanity bag while her mistress is either applying vermillion on her forehead, *surma* in her eyes or completing her make-up
2 Playing *ektara* (an instrument having one wire only) to give company to the lady who herself plays upon a *bina*, playing flute for the lady who awaits the arrival of her lover or playing flute for a couple engaged in sex-act
3 Carrying a small pot, probably filled with water, and chanting hymns as the lady is busy in worship, or the lady unable to

restrain her passion is undressing herself , her mental state has been symbolically depicted by the scorpion on the right thigh

4 Closing his one eye in shame on seeing the lady squeezing her breast in dejection , closing both eyes in shame on being unable to see the lady undress and pinching over her genital
5 Being asked by the lady to see if her lover was in sight
6 Helping the lady to keep balance in her attempt to extricate a thorn from the sole of her foot
7 Teasing the lady who is fondling a child
8 Being patted by the lady who has a parrot sitting on the back of the palm

(b) FEMALE ATTENDANTS

1 Admiring the music played by her lady on flute
2 Sharing the anxious moments of doubtful tryst of her lady
3 Consoling the lady awaiting the arrival of her lover
4 Fanning the lady who is restless and worried due to the delay of her lover
5 Waiting, with garland in hand, by the side of her mistress who is expecting her lover to come any moment, holding a garland while the lady stands in an elated mood after reading the letter held in her hand
6 Waiting for the lady's lover, holding a wine jar
7 Holding the vermillion pot for the lady who looks in a mirror and applies vermillion on her forehead

The artist of Khajuraho has ingeniously and dexterously made use of these figures of attendants to exhibit a particular emotion, much more eloquently through symbols, to create lucid atmosphere of sensuous love and they create an atmosphere of repose, they also break the monotony and seriousness that pervade the languishing humans They mediate between the erogenic outbursts and placid transcendence, they are the ambassadors of peace, fulfilment and satisfaction, they are witty and intelligent, worth confidence of the love-lorn ladies Thus they are useful persons as associates and attendants They, however, sometimes act as perverts

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1 Kanwarlal, "Erotic Sculpture of Khajuraho", Ch 4, p 30

2 R K Mukherjee, "Cosmic Art of India", Ch III, p 87

3 अप्सु निर्मथनादेव रसस्तस्मा द्वरस्त्रिय ।
उत्पेतुर्मनुजश्रेष्ठ तस्मादप्सरसोऽभवन् ॥
Ramayana, Valmiki, 1 45 31

4 अप्रतिग्रहणात्तासा सर्वा साधारणा स्मृता ॥
ibid, 1 45 35

5 Bharat, "Natya Shastra"

6 Pratapa Narayana Sinha Ju Deo, "Rasakusumakara", Int p 5

7 Amaru, "Amaru Shatakam" Verse 31 Tr by John Brough "Poems from the Sanskrit"

8 असूचीसचारे तमसि नभसि प्रौढजलद-
ध्वनिप्राये तस्मिन् पतति दृषदा नीरनिचये ।
इदं सौदामिन्या कनक कमनीय विलसित
मुदं च ग्लानि च प्रथयति पथिष्वेव सुदृशाम् ॥ ३९ ॥
Bhartrihari, "Shringara Shatakam", 39

9 Amaru Shatakam, 71

10 याभिविलोलतरतारकदृष्टिपातै
शक्रदयो पि विजितास्त्वबला कथता ॥ १० ॥
Bhartrihari, ibid, 10 Tr John Brough, ibid

11 Table as given in Ch II of Anangrang

12 Dashakumaracharitam, Part II, 6, 7-9

13 Keith, "History of Sanskrit Literature", p 200 quoted by John Brough, ibid p 92 verse 152

14 ibid, Ch 7 p 132

15 सन्मार्गे तावदास्ते प्रभवति पुरुषस्ताव देवेन्द्रियाणा,
लज्जा तावद्विधत्ते विनयमपि समालम्बते तावदेव ।
भ्रूचापाकृष्टमुक्ता श्रवणपथगता नीलपक्ष्माण एते,
यावल्लीलावतीना न मृदि धृतिमुषो दृष्टिबाणा पतन्ति ॥
Shringara Shatakam, 53

16 Mervyn Levy, ibid, Ch 4, p 76

17 उन्मत्तप्रेमसरम्भादारमन्ते यवगना ।
तत्र प्रस्यूहमाधत् ब्रह्मापि खलु कातर ॥
Shringara Shatakam, 54

18 आलिगनचुम्बननखच्छेद्यदशनच्छेद्यसवेशनसीत्कृत-पुरुषायितोपरिष्टका-
नामष्टनामष्टधा विकल्पभेदादष्टा-वरगकाएवतु पष्टिरिति बाभ्रवीया ॥ ४ ॥
Kama Sutra 2 2 4

19 तत्रासमागतयो प्रीतिलिगद्योतनार्थमालिगनचतुष्टयम् ।
स्पृष्टकम्, विद्धकम्, उद्घृष्टकम्, पीडितकम्, इति ॥ ९ ॥
ibid

20 लतावेष्टिक वृक्षाधिरुढक तिलतण्डुलक,
क्षीरनीरकमिति चत्वारि सप्रयोगकाले ॥ १४ ॥
ibid, 2 2 14

21 ललाटालककपोलनयनवक्ष स्तनोष्ठान्तर्मुखेषु चुम्बनम् ॥ ४ ॥

22 ततथा-निमित्तक स्फुरितक घट्टितकमिति त्रीणि कन्या चुम्बनानि ॥ ७ ॥
ibid, 2 3 7

23 सम तिर्यगुद्भ्रदान्तमवपीडितकमिति चतुर्विधमपरे ॥ ११ ॥
अगुलिसपुटेन पिण्डीकृत्य निर्दशनोष्ठपुटेनावपीडये-
दित्यवपीडितक पञ्चममपि करणम् ॥ १२ ॥
ibid, 2 3 11-12

24 सम पीडितमचिते मृदु शेषागेषु चुम्बन स्थानविशेषयोगात्
ibid

25 मधु तिष्ठति वाचि योषिता हृदिहालाहलमेवकेवलम् ।
अत एव निमीयते धरौ हृदय मुष्टिभिरेव ताड्यते ॥ ६२ ॥
Shringara Shatakam 72

26-33 ऋजुप्रसारितावुभावप्युभयोश्चरणाविति सपुट ॥ १६ ॥
सपुटकप्रयुक्तयन्त्रेणैवदृढमूरु पीडयेदिति पीडितकम् ॥ १९ ॥
उभावप्यूरु ऊर्ध्वाविति तदभुग्नकम् ॥ २४ ॥
चरणावूर्ध्वं नायको स्या धारयेदिति जृम्भितकम् ॥ २५ ॥
नाकस्यास एको द्वितीयक प्रसारित इति
पुन पुनर्व्यत्यासेन वुणुदारितकम् ॥ २८ ॥
ऊर्ध्वस्थितयोयूनो परस्परापाश्रययोः
कुड्यस्तम्भापाश्रितयोर्वा स्थितरतम् ॥ ३७ ॥
कुड्यापाश्रितस्य कण्ठावसक्तबाहुपाशायास्त स्तपजरोविष्टाया अरूप शेन
जघनमभिवेष्टयन्त्या कुड्ये चरणक्रमेणवलन्त्या अवलम्बितकरतम् ॥ ३८ ॥
भूमो वा चतुस्पदवदास्थिताया
वृषलीलयावस्कन्दन धेनुकम् ॥ ३९ ॥
ibid 2 6 16 19 24 25 28 37 38 39

34 Mervyn Levy, "The Moons of Paradise" Ch 4 p 77

35 मिश्रीकृतसद्भावाभ्या द्राभ्या सह सघाटक रतम् ॥
Kamasutra, 2 6 42

36 यन्मिथस्तु विपरीतसविथक स्त्रीयुग युगपदेति कामुक ।
Ratırahasya, Kokkoka

37 बह वीभिश्च सह गोयूथिकम ॥
Kama Sutra 2 6 43

38 तेषामेकैकशो युगपच यथासात्मय यथायोग च रजयेयु· ॥ ४६ ॥
एको धारयेदेनामन्यो निषेवेत । अन्यो जघन मुखमन्यो मध्यमन्य
इति वार वारेण व्यतिकरेण चानुतिष्ठेयु ॥ ४७ ॥
ıbıd 2 6 46 47

39-40 R K Mukheıjı, "Socıal Functıon of Art", Ch X, p 173

41 Mervyn Levy, "ıbıd, Ch 2 pp 45-46

42 K M Munshı, "Saga of Indıan Sculpture", p 37

43-44 Kanwarlal, "Erotıc Sculpture of Indıa", Appendıx, p 74-75

45-47 रजकनापितमालाकारगान्धिकसौरिकाभिक्षुकगोपालकताम्बूलिक-
सौवर्णिकपीठमर्दविटविदूषकादयो मित्राणि तद्योषिन्मित्राश्च
नागरका स्युरिति वात्स्यायन ॥ ३४ ॥
यदुभयौ साधारणमुभयत्रोदार विशेषतयो नायिकाया
सुविस्रदध तत्र दूतकर्म ॥ ३५ ॥
पटुता धाष्टर्यमिङ्गिताकारज्ञता प्रतारणकालज्ञता
विषह्यबुद्धित्व लघ्वी प्रतिपत्ति सोपाया चेति दूतगुणा ॥ ३६ ॥
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48 अविभवस्तु शरीरमात्रो मल्लिकाफेनकषायमात्रपरिच्छद·
पूज्याद्देशादागत कलासु विचक्षणस्तदुपदेशेन गोष्ठया
वेशोचिते च वृत्ते साधयेदात्मानमिति पीठमर्द ॥ ३१ ॥
भुक्तविभवस्तु गुणवान सकलत्रो वेशे गोष्ठया च
बहुमतस्तदुपजीवी च विट ॥ ३२ ॥
एकदेशविद्यस्तु क्रीडनको विश्वास्यश्च विदूषक· ॥ वैहासिको वा ॥ ३३ ॥
ıbıd 1 4 31-33

49 Bhanudatta, "Rasa Manjarı" & Rudra Bhatta, "Shrıngara Tılaka"

50 विदूषक, —अत्थि, सुणादु प्पिअबअस्सो, कधेमि सुहासिद दे । जदो प्पहुदि कप्पूर-
मजरी रक्खाभवणादो सुरङ्गादुआरे देवीए दिट्टा, तदो प्पहुदि त सुरङ्गदुआर देवीए
बहलसिलासचएण पीरन्ध कदुअ मिहिद । अणङ्गसेणा कलिगसेणा कामसेणा बसन्त-

सेणा बिब्भमसेणेत्ति पच सेणाणामधेआओ चामरधारिणीओ फारप्फुरविकदकरबालह-
त्थपाइक्कसहस्सेण सह कारामन्दिरस्स रक्खाणिमित पुब्बदिसि णिउत्ताओ।
अणङ्गलेहा चित्तलेहा चन्दलेहा मिअङ्कलेहा बिब्भमलेहेत्ति लेहाणामधेआओ पच
सैरन्धीओ पुखिदसिलीमुहधणुहत्थेण णिबिडणिबद्धहतूणीरदुद्धरेण धाणुक्कसहस्सेण सम
दक्खिणाए दिसाए णिबेसिदाओ।
कुन्दमाला चन्दणमाला कुबलअमाला कचणमाला बउलमाला मङ्गलमाला माणिक्कमालेत्ति
सत्त मालेत्रिणामधेआओ णबणिसिदकुतहत्थपाइक्कसहस्सेण सम ताम्बूलकरकबाहिणीओ
पच्छिमाए दिसाए णिबसिदाओ।
ताण बि उण उबरि मदिराबढो केलिबदी कल्लोलबदी तरगबदी अणङ्गबदीत्ति पच-
बदीत्तिणामधेआओ परिवारिओकुमारीओ कणअचित्तदडहत्था ओ सुहासिअपादिआओ
बदीणामधेआओ सेणाए अद्धक्खीकिदाओत्ति।

Rajshekhar "Karpurmanjari", Act-IV pp 164-7 free translation by the author

51-52 Kamasutra, Part V, Ch-IV pp 172-174.

Art

9

The Erotic Aspect

Of all human emotions the most prominent and natural is love Love envelopes the entire field of human life In a broad sense the human life exists because there is love—it is because of love that man desires to love—it is love of life , it is love toward the entire mankind , it is love for the animate and inanimate world , it is love towards each other—man for man, woman for woman, and man for woman and vice versa It is love that sustains man in all the shocks and terror of the changes in life, amidst despair difficulties and chaos , it is love that maintains the cycle of creation, it is love that leads man to all the virtues, and it is love that makes the world worth living



There is a close relationship between emotion and expression All emotions may not be expressed and all expressions may not be emotions, yet all emotions seek and

need expression Devoid of expression the emotions prey upon man and cause disharmony, perversion and hatred , disappointment, frustration and disability and disease, neurosis and untimely death Proper and timely expression of emotions helps to calm the tension in life, restrain the incoherent thoughts, regulates the everchanging pattern of life, and stimulates the mind to good behaviour and action When emotions find suitable expressions they improve their own quality and add beauty and charm to life as well While they impress and influence they undergo a severe test—their quality is constantly observed by social and religious institutions nay by the entire humanity —thus the individuality of these emotions is transformed in an unconscious process as universal This unconsciousness that pervades the consciousness is in a way the cause of ideals and morals in human behaviour and is the source of all that is good in life, it restrains the expression of baser thoughts and unhealthy desires of man and creates a balance between unexpressed and expressed minds of man, between the inner and outer selves of man, between the individuals and society, and between one culture and another This unconscious control over human expression can be sensed and perceived in the actions of man, in the nature of his dutifulness, in his feelings of responsibility towards himself, other individuals and the society His expressions become, therefore, such creative forces that function in unconcious, natural and automatic way These forces, to enumerate on one hand, are the faculties of comprehension, learning and conclusion , the qualities to desire, aspire and achieve , the ability to deduce, implement and contribute , the impulse of sincerity, devotion and sacrifice , and the proneness to virtue—moral and good On the other hand, they express the failures, frustrations and viciousness of man

Emotion of love on the sensuous plane is the emotion of sex The erotic emotion has always prevailed over other emotions so much so that it has become the central emotion in man's life The entire emotional force, in one way or other, is influenced by the dynamism of sexual love

Man's conception regarding sex has always changed, mainly due to the changes in social, psychological, moral, aesthetical and religious standards and codes The knowledge of sex develops in him from the moment of his consciousness towards the difference between the male and the female Love grows sensuous and erotic with the knowledge of sex Man learned his earliest lessons on sex from the animal world where there is nothing to hide Woman-kind was discovered by man as the means to satisfy his sexual urge

In the beginning, sexual act was unrestricted so much so that it was an association of any man with any woman regardless of time and place But gradually the personal aspects, the individuality, the feeling of the moral aspect, and realisations of the social problems of sex became clear This shows the beginning of the sanctified emotion of love—of sex—of male and female relationship As the family and social institutions gained stability, the problems of shelter, protection and peace were solved, man became more rational and wise The necessity of acquiring progeny to maintain heredity the sex was linked up to strict, reasonable, and moral aspects of life No doubt the life was viewed from different perspectives by different people There was great diversity in the principles, ideals and reasonings that sustained life

Then came the conception of divine forces that influenced life, the fear of these forces instilled in him piety, devotion, and love towards these His life became an admixture of social and divine ideals All that caused, influenced, and destroyed life was sublimated as divine Thus the sex-act was sublimated too, and was considered to be a sacred rite Along with this honour paid to the most natural 'biological urge' in man the status of woman in the society came to be elevated to personify the life-force—the force that equalled the force of the Creator—and every woman was compared to, rather taken as, a divine being

The position of woman in the society in different periods in history and in various cultural phases of the country has undergone many changes If in one period she has been the source of progeny , in other she was a means of pleasure , in another a degenerating force, but she was always a house-wife She has, though, remained respected as mother and considerable amount of reverence fell in her share If she has been the cause of misfortune, trouble and chaos in the history of many a civilisation throughout the world, she has also saved mankind from going to extinction, from becoming morbid and dry-rot, and from barbarism She has always instilled in man healthy ideals, inspired in him moral sense, and has been a source of creative energy , she has infused in him high aesthetic principles, refined taste and sense of humour Yet there are instances which indicate that she has remained neglected even in her own sphere—the household We may, however, fail to establish reasonable understanding, definite correlation, and solid background for the behavioural pattern of man towards woman if we overlook the aspect of love, the sex pattern between the two, and the position of woman in the society

In the world of emotion it is love only that counts most Man's

love towards woman is always sensual and the degree in which it is expressed depends on the social atmosphere, standards and ideals The beginning of the emotion of love depends on propinquity, association and freedom of expression

Love on the erotic side pertains only to sex—the expression of which has always invited much criticism Since long, the erotic aspect of love has been expressed in art and literature How far it has been proper or improper and what were the reasons for such expression shall be discussed under the following heads

(a) Social aspect
(b) Psychological aspect
(c) Moral aspect

(a) Social aspect

Art is an embodiment of expression of emotions, visions, experiences and thoughts of man Inspired by nature, influenced by his surroundings and invoked by creative urge man expresses his ideals and achievements, joys and sorrows, and human as well as divine feelings in his works of art

In works of art the social order of the period is reflected Thus art is the mirror of the society in which one can perceive the prevalent systems, ideals and values

It has been the desire of man to live in his own fashion, to enjoy more freedom from various forms of restraints, and to establish his separate identity In this way social stability has always been threatened by the separatist individuals Since it is not possible for an individual to achieve the desired freedom because, of the group living, this denial of freedom sometimes causes frustrations, disappointments and dissensions in man who is joined by others in resentment to the authority of the society Together sometimes they try to defy the taboos, act in irrational manner and adopt anti-social means to achieve their aims.

The individual separatists sooner or later indulge in most irrational exhibition of their sexual impulse social harmony is endangered Lack of restraint or weakness of restraint leads to deterioration in morals In a period of sexual freedom there have been greater creative achievements Proves that the sexual impulse can be transformed to represent something divine and far from being social nuisance it can gain creative power Creative expression reduces crude sexual activity in sublimation, and converts libido into creative activity [1] Thus the sexual impulse may on one hand become an object of social nuisance

and on the other it may contribute in a great way to mould the human emotions to the benefit of mankind While on one side the inclination exclusively to sex makes man self-centred and weak in morals, well-guided sex impulse leads to a more happy life In a well-organised sex-life lies the seeds of balanced and harmonious relationship between man and man, man and woman and man and society According to Havelock Ellis, "the acquirement of human happiness and harmony remains impossible"[2], until an erotic personality is acquired. Acquiring proficiency in sex may not harm the image of man in the society The sexual attitudes of man determine the nature of society, and until and unless a change is made in the attitudes towards sex at individual level it is difficult to change the social standards

Since an organised and balanced sexual life is a means to achieve peaceful and happy life and sometimes it encourages creative impulse in man, it is important that social restraint on sex is imposed very judiciously Care must be taken to see that no imbalance is created in the life of man and no harm done to man and society relationship otherwise the spiritual and physical achievements of man would be marred "The society which provides adequate outlets will have few sexual problems "[3]

All human expressions require approval of society, directly or indirectly Particularly in case of expression of sexual impulse on which society in all ages has imposed taboos Until there is no severe restraint an individual refrains from coming into direct conflict with society Taboos on sex if imposed severely the people will be more sex minded and will find orgiastic means to fulfil their desire—passion, or they will adopt unhealthy means or indulge in sodomy in defiance to the restrains "They will develop psycho-neurotic symptoms, such as psychologically caused illness, delusions, hallucinations and hysterical manifestations of nervous kinds The stronger personalities defy the taboos "[4]

Sex impulse is a very natural emotion of man Love between persons of opposite sexes is an eternal factor Karapatri remarks that, "In the world also all love, all lust, all desire, is a search for enjoyment "

"The desire of the lustful man for a woman exists because he sees her as the form of his pleasure, the source of his enjoyment "

"All enjoyment, all pleasure, is the experience of divinity The whole universe springs-forth from enjoyment"[5] , Woman has a respectable position as mother As she enjoys being at such a prominent place she cannot be the sole object of enjoyment The exalted position of woman has helped to limit and subdue sex impulse of man

The institution of marriage has helped much in reducing crimes concerning sex and in moderating the expression of sex impulse

The status of woman has always changed whenever social ideals and faiths, and the sex impulse of man have changed In India woman has never found freedom of expression, authority and power The only faculty in her favour has been her being mother which made her invulnerable and has been considered as equal to the Mother Divine—Prakriti or the female principle of the gods

Repression imposed on human expression causes uneasiness, inactivity and disorder When sex impulse is repressed or limited the imbalance created reduces the physical and psychic abilities of man It is necessary, therefore, that the sex impulse of man is properly expressed to the degree of satisfaction Through sexual activity, "all the finer activities of the organism, physical and psychic, may be developed and satisfied "[6]

Difference between ideals and action need careful examination as the ideals of a group may not be the ideals of society and also that the social ideals may not be commonly accepted This is why when social laws and restrictions are found unacceptable or unsuitable to a period there appears dissatisfaction and revolt in the people who either force a change or implement new ideals Their agitation against the outworn ideals leads to disagreement with such ideals also that directly or indirectly do not have any relation with the main cause of their dissatisfaction

Restraint on sexual impulse often perturbs man and we find occasional revision and modification of taboos imposed on sex It is, however, necessary to have taboos on sex, in one form or other It is also evident that religious and psychic taboos work more efficiently than physical and social taboos in controlling sexual impulse of man

Growth of dissension to the taboos on sex creates problem for society as simultaneously man seeks freedom to act He practices unsocial acts with contempt and disregard to social ideals One of the most common acts that these individuals adopt is sex orgy This also tends to develop the practice of mother worship, take shelter in asceticism—orgiastic worship—in which he seeks enough freedom of behaviour and sex "Out of man's spiritual consciousness and disinterested emotions rise new concept of social structure, new values and ideals "[7]

In India the period in which erotic expression in art and literature took place was certainly a period which grew out of the dissensions of the masses towards the puritanism of the early phase In this period

we find the popularity of Tantricism which worshipped the mother-goddess Shakti and prescribed 'Maithuna' or sex-act as an essential rite in the process to achieve liberation provided him with sexual pleasure in a safer way. The period in which Tantricism was much popular with the orgiastic ritual order and worship of mother-goddess shows clearly that the society was clearly 'matrist'. The 'matrist' tendencies as a moral system with signs of Mother-identification regard woman with respect and accord her much freedom. They are inclined to pleasure, and sex. A woman is a mother, a wife and a daughter and she is worshipped in all these aspects. In Tantric worship she is worshipped in her wife aspect in which the 'Shakti' is considered superior even to her husband 'Shiva'. The Tantrics visualise 'Shakti' in a woman and perform the ritual with her.

The rise of Tantricism shows definite attempt to change the social order of the day. The Tantric way of worship was being adopted by various sects of Hinduism, the chief, of which are five, viz., Shaiva Tantricism, Shakta Tantricism, Vaishnava Tantricism, Saur Tantricism, and Ganpatya Tantricism. Shakti worship in Buddhism came to be known as Vajrayana. With this change from patrist to matrist social order a state of confusion was created—as the society was experiencing a change in the system of its beliefs and faiths.

The result of this was a new sect known as 'Sahaja'. This preached simplicity, spiritualism and freedom and the differences between the rituals of Shaiva, Shakta and Vaishnava religions were resolved.

Sahaja is free of the guilt of love-impulse and tension. It maintains that a man or woman must not either become a slave of sexual drives or suppress the sex-desire so that during the moments of intimate contact realisation of unrestrained and undisturbed peace may be possible. The Sahaja philosophy had a great impact on the social institutions like marriage and on the ideals of sexual abstinence and love. Pursuance of *kama* leads to freedom from *kama* and the sex-act. This ideology is behind the carvings in stone of erotic theme in Khajuraho. There is an absence of libido and the figures despite the eroticism unite in a complementary aspect and this completeness is the goal of life. This union represents the union between the soul and God, action and passivity; indulgence and abstinence; it symbolises the cosmic fall of the transcendent and the transcendence of the mortal to divine plane.

The art of the pre-Tantric period was free from sex but in the Tantric and Sahaja periods the art was infused with romanticism and power; human sensibility and spiritual sublimity; tenderness and beauty

Thus we find a most feasible aspect of the representation of the erotic in the art of Khajuraho, the evolution of which lies within the period described above Here, as elsewhere in the country, the woman seems to have found prominent place due to the mother worship The sex-act must have been considered as an essential and sacred act—its representation in works of art must have been taken as a device for lessons on sex

The society, as we make out from whatever little we know of the period, was affluent and in peace , there seems to exist no conflict either within or without , between the social structure and the individuals Since the authority of religion was dominant and bindings of the social norms were highly religion oriented, whatever was the order or injunction of the religious authority was taken for granted Art was given the responsibility of propagating the faith that prevailed at that time

(b) Psychological Aspect

The socio-religious-cultural aspect of life of his ancients and ancestors becomes vestigial to guide his own life and thus the presence of an indirect influence can be felt which restrains the expressions and actions of man

The society, however, implements measures of direct control through several of its agencies Man builds his own world according to his likes and dislikes because the feelings and thoughts differ from individual to individual and each man wishes to act in his own different way His intellectual growth differs too from other men Man tries to satisfy his ego, his desires and his urges through the prevailing socio-economic agencies and conditions with the help of psycho-physical atmosphere that he creates or finds around himself He tries to achieve his goal through personal efforts and with the help of his fellowmen He succeeds if all is well but fails when his relations with human institutions are not harmonious In the latter situation he may have to act in a way that would be contradictory to his temperament He is thus forced to live two lives, one related to his inner-self and the other to his outer-self In the former he is uncompromising, dissatisfied and revolting in spirit while in the latter he is amiable, adjustable and polished

The society does not permit freedom of expression Thus the individual man falters, checked and restrained and is forced to live amidst depression, hesitation, and frustration

Man finds expression for his emotions—which is a means to appease the mind He forms a well-balanced society free of mal-adjustment

between man and man, and society and full of vital forces that utilises the creative urge to strengthen culture While the repressions and taboos on expression create disgust, disharmony and unrest in man, and make psychological impact on him so that not only his personal life is affected but it also invites degeneration and decay to social and cultural institutions

Man's inner and outer-selves are influenced by two processes one, personal control in which he is forced to debate with himself and control his expressions, and the other, social control that is forced on him from without There is a constant conflict between the outer and inner-selves of man The inner-self of man is unable to accept the domination of the outer-self, and the man is forced to suppress his inner-self in favour of his sense of duty In this way the emotions that remain unexpressed for various reasons tend to become part of the unconscious mind and later influence man's behavioural pattern This process has been called the raising of the limen (threshold) and represents a shutting off or denying of the irrational [8]

Man desires to let others know his feelings, the natural impulse of expressing love, hatred, joy, sorrow, anger, pain, etc These emotions are controlled by the sense of reason and the feeling of duty, obligation and of good and bad The most critical of all emotions is that of sex On purely emotional level, sex is love—love for every one and with everything—but on physical level it is purely carnality or desire for sexual union and "can account for the most truly human traits"[9]

The emotion of love dominates over all other emotions and the behavioural patterns of man are moulded in a particular way The degree of sensitivity of love in the unconscious mind of man regulates all his actions and controls his behaviour As the emotion of love is deeply related to love it too makes identical impacts on man's actions and behaviour The sex and the creative forces active in man and the sentimental and physical worlds of man in social as well as spiritual spheres become "intertwined with all the highest and subtlest human emotions and activities, with the refinements of social intercourse, with high adventure in every sphere, with art, with religion"[10] The unconscious mind of man reacts to the impulses of love, hate, etc , for the reasons that these emotions have in the past been present in his conscious mind In normal life man responds to these emotions because of their presence in the unconscious plane When at the surface these emotions work as either his creative or destructive impulses while these are also amalgamated to the sex instinct

The overall development of man depends upon the balanced raising

of the qualities, standards, and appearances of social, religious and humanistic values of life Sex is one of the factors that degenerates life and is vulnerable to his own sex instincts to the level of self-destruction Hunting for pleasure, indulging in sex, and disregarding the human and rational factors lead man as well as society to disrepute, degradation and disintegration When the sex instinct of man or the libido is controlled and his energies canalised to promote order, standard and morals of life, level of man, society, and religion is raised The natural instinct of love and therefore sexual impulse cannot be suppressed by repression or taboos or by branding it as sin Proper outlet must be provided to the inner-instincts of man and inhibitions on the expression of emotions may be imposed up to such a level where there may be no scope for disharmony and dissatisfaction To establish healthy relationship between all men it is essential that certain restrictions be imposed on the expression of human emotions These taboos may be based on moral, social and religious standards that could bind man in strong ties of duty, mutual adjustments and fear of the other world

The sex instinct in man cannot always be controlled by absence of provocative expressions or by giving no chance to the sex-stimulating thoughts to plague the mind The psycho-physiological aspect of human life is partly guided by the conscious mind and partly by the unconscious It works much more efficiently in controlling man's behaviour The measures of social control of sex-instincts of man have failed miserably giving birth to severe displeasure among males and females both who adopt esoteric and orgiastic means to satisfy their sexual needs and even find unnatural and unhealthy sex relations like homosexuality and who may also tend to be androgynous The psychic measures, however, have yielded encouraging results

Mind is the seat of emotions Persons who physically exert themselves may not possess a mind sharply responsive to emotions of delicate nature—like love, whereas who exert their minds need some kind of repose to distract them from their exhausting routine and may therefore adopt such enjoyments that are related to sex and love As "the roots of the desire for knowledge consist in a desire for sexual knowledge, and in particular a desire to confirm the Oedipal suspicion"[11] those who are of the latter type may be much more inclined towards sex

In its culmination the sex instinct may either be a divine experience of bliss, transcendent love, and compassion or it may be purely sensual delight, carnalism and obsession In the former state all human institutions work together to achieve a universal goal of human good

whereas in the latter all human values are degenerated to loathsome, inharmonious and unprecedented level where man forgets his past, disregards the future and ignores the rational and ideal aspects of life The emotional aspect becomes so much dominating that he is unable to judge the propriety of his thoughts and actions This is not due to his loss of control over his emotions but it is due to the repression on his emotion of sex which creates feelings of guilt and produces psychic impotence To free man from this state of 'psychic impotence' it is desirable that love and sex instincts of man should get full opportunity of expression in a natural way free of inhibitions, sense of guilt and 'conception of love as vile and unclean' The sexual instinct in man may either be suppressed by force imposition of taboos ,or by allowing it to function in a natural way through which the pleasure of sex may be derived by man in unrestrained manner, or it may be made sanctified to become a function of begetting progeny The social and cultural developments of an age may be the deciding factors for the human emotions to find limited or free expressions Taylor is of opinion that, " there are three ways of dealing with sexual instincts repression, catharsis and sublimation"[12] Havelock Ellis says of sublimation that, when "fundamental sexual energy is elevated from elementary, and primitive form into complex and developed forms it is termed sublimation"[13]

The society as a whole is benefited by diverting the sex instincts of people towards creative and other emotional activities that govern and develop social standards, morals and culture The expressions which are termed as objectionable and unwanted for exhibiting in public are rejected by the society for man is expected to behave in a granted fashion and manner of the age and is not allowed to misuse the freedom of expression granted to him He has to be conscious about his mannerism, his behaviour and actions so that other people may not be offended If he behaves in the fashion contrary to social norms people retaliate forcefully and curb the expression and society rushes to their help with imposition of strong taboos even if the hands of the law may not be able to apprehend the offender in such cases Taylor says that, "Public opinion, is always more conservative than the sum of 'private' opinion The law moves with even greater slowness than does 'public opinion'."[14] Thus the 'private opinion' must not go beyond such limit which may not be liked by either 'public' or 'law' opinion

Man finds proper outlet for his emotional self in many creative activities which may be termed as art The emotions that continue

to remain unexpressed are thrown in the unconscious The human behaviour is very much influenced by the emotions that become the unconscious forces of mind Thus the creative urge of man is the result of his unconscious mind It is, however, true that whatever experienre and knowledge is gained by man remains stored in his unconscious mind and the cultural, moral and behavioural patterns of life of man are very much influenced by this store So it is with art too The art of man reflects the maturity of his mind, his experience and his learning , it also exhibits his thoughts, his beliefs and his approach to matters related to individual-self or to all men. "All great art derives its springs of inspiration from the well of unconscious , its poignancy from the mind's conflicts and pains, and its poise from the integration of the self"[15] The role of society can never be overlooked and all the creative activities of man which are fused with universal spirit become true art Max Beerbohm says that, "mentally and socially conditioned as man is, those emotions, moods and sentiments are higher and more stable and enduring that are social rather than egocentric, and that unite persons in ever widening range and in ever deepening integration"[16] Stella Kramrisch opines that, "Just as Indian art is firmly rooted in nature, so it is securely established in its social context and its supra-personal origin"[17].

The art of man is the product of his unconscious mind where his unexpressed emotions are forced to stay for such time when they would find expression The emotion of sex on which the society imposes taboos remains unexpressed and due to which the human behaviour is unconsciously affected The great cultures of the world experienced degeneration and decay in the height of their achievements and glory We find in India, too, a period immediately after the glorious reigns of the Gupta kings in which the country was divided into small principalities and states the rulers of which had declared their independence from alien subordination The country was facing the worst crisis of political, social and economic nature Even the principal religions were confronted with bitter rivalries that gave birth to many small sects that advocated attractive means of achieving their goals Suddenly through the length and breadth of the country a new trend of eroticism appeared in art and literature Mostly this eroticism was connected with the myths and legends of various deities of every religion It is, however, important to note here that the Tantric ritual connected with the Shaktas advocated the practice of sublimed sex-act as one of the acts of worship It is since this esoteric orgy developed in this

period that all the erotic wealth in art and literature has been ascribed to its influence. The nature of man and society that produce or tolerate erotic expressions must be carefully examined, their moral standard, aesthetic approach and psychic conditions should be analysed, and the values of such expressions be weighed against the needs, demands and utility in context with other important matters that are essential for life.

In the manner the erotic has been expressed under the garb of religion, may have cast adverse effect even in those days when the expression of sex was tolerated. It is most probable that the people of the period were used to such expression due to their own weakness towards sex but this does not mean that the purpose and meaning behind all the expressions of the kind had fulfilled their aim, whatever it may have been.

There can be two aspects of the matters connected with sex, in one, there is complete denial of sex that leads to asceticism and in the other, there is devotedness to sex as is the nature of man. Taylor describes these as "one inhibited, ascetic and sex denying, the other spontaneous, indulgent and permissive"[18]. The aim of achieving the release from the worldly matters by indulging them particularly in sex, appears most illogical, more so when the people are expected to maintain a balance between the religious transcendence and sexual pleasure, and are exposed to the height of sex-adventurism juxtaposed to the centre of spiritual piety.

(c) Moral aspect

Since the time society came to exist as a permanent institution of human welfare it adopted and assimilated qualities that could force man to abide by certain standards and norms and thus society could very effectively restrain the thought, behaviour and conduct of man. This restraint, however, resulted through mutual agreement between the common man and forces which spearheaded the agreement. As soon as some change in the old social pattern is sought moral standard and customary systems in vogue are put to test and if their characters and values fail to impress a particular period they are severed from being social necessity to make room for new ones. Change is necessary—and change ensures fresh lease of life to the social standards. Taylor has aptly described that, "The moral is what is customary. And what is customary constantly changes"[19]. The reasons for this change also include the weakness or lack of restraint due to which deterioration in morals sets in. Deterioration is caused either due to

opulence and peace in society or due to suffering and maladjustment of people, it is also caused when there is difference between ideals and actions of man This difference, however, is the result of lack of harmony, tolerance, and sincerity It is also an outcome of severe restrains on expressions, on sexual impulse and on actions of man

The society prescribes moral codes for man The social norms are the first essential factors that man has to observe throughout his life Whatever may be his personal achievements and contributions he is bound to observe the laws and rules of the society Society restricts expressions, for man may misuse the opportunities given to him The repression is, however, an outside force that compels man to behave in a particular manner The inner-self of man cannot always be expressed until the man is willing enough to allow his real self be known to another man or the society , as he is known by his outer-self only and his personality of inner-self is alien to his outer-self Whenever the inner-self of man is in a position to dominate the outer-self, the ideals, till then prevalent, are thrown away and change occurs in society Yet this inner-self of man has no independent identity, although it comes in direct conflict with the outer-self Man lives in the world of his own, his moral codes, his own way of reasoning, and his own process of action are based on group living

Man's life is generally influenced by three kinds of moral forces or ideals personal, social and religious The first two are so much close to each other that often the personality of man comes in conflict with the social ideals The social structure in which man is woven, however, gives enough opportunity to the individualistic aspirations and actions but he is closely watched by the other two forces He may take some liberty with personal ideals but no sooner he intrudes into the jurisdiction of the other two he realises his dwarfness

In the life of Indian people religion has always dominated all other institutions There emerged different religious ideals and morals, many types of social patterns and several modes of individual thinking and behavioural patterns, but surprisingly many ideals of human life remained the same throughout this turmoil , they have undergone only the processing of refinement and elaboration, of polishing and clarification, and of acquiring vigour and stability

The morals of the Vedic period lay stress on right action and were centred on the individual But the Upanishadic morals are of universal character, though they are very much the elaboration of the Vedic morals Here we find that the stress is, however, on self-control and detachment from sensual desires The Charvaka system advocates

the theory of seeking pleasure as the highest moral ideal, and aims at the blind satisfaction of individual's desires, and maximum material enjoyment by fair means or foul This system, however, does not believe in God or other world The Jain moral code aims at complete detachment, mental, physical and actual from wordly affairs, and advocates control over mind, body and speech, like Buddhism Both the systems, however, lay emphasis on Dharma (moral duty) and Moksha (liberation) Jainism advocates penance as the means of self-realisation, whereas Buddhism does not prescribe self-mortification

All the social and religious developments, changes and modifications have aimed only at one thing—individual morality In every significant period of history and culture there has been considerable rethinking and reestablishing of morals, imposition of restraints, prescribing means to implement the ideals in life, and punishing the violators of the codes of conduct Mainly these codes were based on the four-fold aims of life, i e , Artha (wealth), Kama (the fulfilment of desires), Dharma (duty), and Moksha (spiritual perfection)

In India religion gave man peace, shelter, and purity of thought and action There were rituals prescribed for all his actions, codes of conduct, and moral guidance available for everything connected with this or for the other world All religions of the world aim at spiritual perfection

Man often neglected the moral part very much because proper co-ordination between duty and deed was very difficult When he was more inclined towards the deeds he was morally conscious and religious also, as morality leads to righteousness Sidgwick opines that, " Virtue is manifested in the performance of duty (or good acts going beyond duty)" [20] Virtue and duty have been seen together in context of their goodness and morality Oesterle too describes that, "Human action in its most perfect form is virtuous activity" [21] There is a close relationship between consciousness of mind, i e , knowledge and morality and also between morality and action, but action which is motivated by desire is not always inspired or guided by desire But the knowledge of morals do not lead man to morality

Now that man was either conscious of his duty or, his actions were within the prescribed limits of morality, one factor remained common—the need and desire to express his feelings He was concerned with achieving pleasure of his senses only and disregarded the after-affects caused by this individuality The normal and abnormal, finer and baser, and good and bad elements of his emotions turn by turn became prominent and by subjugating him brought his inner-self

to light The good element or 'good will' have hidden in it creative qualities A human action is morally good because it is done for the sake of duty [22] Further that, "Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law"[23] "This 'reverence of law' is due to 'a pure activity' known as 'a power of reason"[24] When this 'power of reason' of man fails him he acts in an abnormal manner One of the main reasons for this kind of behaviour is the increased independent feeling of man There are other reasons like the sensuous feelings, individual gains, and state of tension because of the lack of moral feelings Love inspires man to act—to action, to morals—to 'ideal state of things', and to qualities that help to build an ideal man, an ideal society and an ideal world, whereas the lack of love or limitations on love or restricted love would make it imperfect

Man is dragged to safe footing by his conscience Even if there remains no factor like virtue, love, moral ideal, etc , to guide him and to control him, he is saved many a time by forces like intuition, conscience, and faculty of reasoning

The moral ideals have been changing as and when changes occured in social life, progress and social consciousness Man has not responded always to the forces which aimed at better life He preferred the other way He was inclined to adopt the life of struggle, of strain, and of problems These were either of his own creation or inflicted on him by other men These two types of forces create new behavioural patterns Akolkar says that, "out of man's spiritual consciousness and disinterested emotions rise new concept of social structure, new values and ideals"[25]

The man with disinterested emotions and conscious intentions may be studied under two groups one, as the constructive qualities and the other as the destructive qualities The former includes the thoughts, skills and deeds of man The intellectual thinking of man gives birth to moral ideals, philosophies, religious doctrines and learned and special discourses and writings of general character The faculty of creative skill of man leads him to produce works of art related to architecture, sculpture, painting, music, drama and dance The outburst of energy and mind is also witnessed in the deeds of man that either lead him to achieve political, social or individual goals The latter includes such thoughts and actions that disturb the normalcy of life, robs peace of mind, destroy life, lead man to accumulate extra energy and wealth causing displeasure and fear in others seeking sensual pleasures and working against the accepted principles and ideals of life and morality

Art harnesses the forces of indiscipline, ignoble ideals, and viciousness, it creates balance of mind, harmony in life, and righteousness in deeds Thus art has in it the potentialities of reform and change It leads man to better and better state of life Since " if art cannot make gods of men, a close acquaintance with it always tends to make men a little more godly than they would have been otherwise"[26] It tends to make men a little more human "The ultimate values of art transcend the individual and the time and circumstance"[27] The true works of art transcend the human values "Great art can alone redeem It brings wholeness to the emotional life, it purifies, it ennobles and bleeds away disturbing tensions and the corrosive fluids of remorse and guilt It is sanctifying"[28]

Since in art human emotions are portrayed with the vivacity of all the actions of life, it also symbolises all that is ideal and true of man's life Art fulfils an object of contributing its share of making a better world and "in giving expression to the ideals of classical humanism is making his art the servant of an ideal"[29] By serving an ideal it makes the ideals durable so that the future generation may learn and follow the spirit contained in them

The most personal aspect of human emotions lies in the feeling of sex The morality of sex as conceived in the days of early puritanism was free from condemnation of insanity in the free-play of sex, on the contrary, sex was considered as an essential aspect of life that imposed restraint, unnoticed, on the deteriorating moral standards It is true that there was undefined conception of sex and therefore the measures of sin and obscenity were not attached to it Since the puritans came to power sex and women were considered 'as the instrument of Satan' "The moral standards applied to sex relations are the residual product of that exaltation of ritual purity which pronounced a curse upon sex, stigmatized women as the instrument of Satan and poured scorn upon motherhood"[30] Thus all the responsibility of whatever irrational involved in sex switched over to the lot of woman For woman it became necessary and binding to observe chastity Due to this restrictive attitude to sex the status of women was very much depressed Since in the early days when a woman was free in her sex-relationships she could enjoy the pleasures of sex with many men irrespective of time and place But later on it was felt that one woman should be loyal to one man only Thus the institution of marriage came into being

Certain institutions work to maintain the values of individual, social, and universal moral ideals These institutions are family,

society, and state on one hand and religion on the other and their "control is an organized one"[31]

The sex-morality has been a problem for persons of all societies in all civilisations and this "is much more a problem of how, with whom and in what respect"[32] By wise guidance the sexual activities may be used "not only to personal development and well-being but to the moral betterment of the world"[33] It is necessary to introduce and implement some taboos on sex to curb the development of this obsession in people Consciousness to the moral codes helps to create better understanding in the society Still sexual morality must be introduced judiciously People, however, must not be forced to accept the dicatates of the moral standards The best way to tackle the problem of sex may be as its sublimation "Because sublimation acts' by transforming some part at all events of the creative sexual energy from its elementary animal manifestations into more highly individual and social manifestations, or at all events into finer forms of sexual activity"[34] Sublimation of all human actions would certainly bring change in social standard By sublimating sex the rudimentary natural manifestations of sex are exalted The life of man attains meaning, harmony and peace, the inner as well as the outer-selves of man shine with grace and beauty There is created an ideal ground for unification of souls

Man can never be free from sex and, therefore, transformation of sex is necessary We are not to fight sex but to befriend it, then the energy of sex becomes the energy of love If this energy of sex is repressed, love will not emerge from it—whatever will emerge will be obsession and make man more and more sex-minded

In India sex was considered to be divine and it symbolised creation This divineness of sex leads us to liberation from the bondage of sex, from the obsession of sex We become more obsessed by sex when our sex-instincts are repressed We can be elevated from this obsession only by complete knowledge of sex

In opposing sex we become more tied to it But by observing continence we win over the viles of sex Continence is actually the process by which the energy is stored By observing continence we do not fight sex, we accumulate energy—we try to befriend sex—we try to know it It is by knowing sex that we transform it—we transform its energy to be used for other useful purposes because "continence leads to virtue, in particular to the virtue of temperance"[35] Man discovers the source of energy that converts—transforms his search

for the ideals, to the search for the divine Even sex may help him in attaining this goal

In Khajuraho temples there is probably this search for the divine which has been portrayed in the sculptures that depict the most intimate relationship of males and females Here the emotion of love is portrayed in the emotion of sex , this love for release—this love for the sublimation—is the goal of man, to identify his self with God It is here that probably sex has been treated and depicted as the meditation of God , as the ritual and prayer of the supreme power

There are two factors that are prominently exhibited here One is the passivity of the man and the other is the most active appeal of sex in the female The female offers to submit completely—without ego, but the man suffers for a while from the obsession of sex When gradually the realisation of sex is created in him he too casts away his ego and joins the congregation of sex and meditates without distinction of self, of his being man , no ego is left and probably in this state of love he is confronted to the truth , the God is realized in this exalted state of meditation and man achieves the bliss—and the release

One may question that there is only sex and sex-act predominent in these sculptures, sex adjacent to meditation—in opposite and contrast to human nature—attachment and release , human love poised against the divine Does this symbolise the test of human emotions—two emotions of opposite nature ? Further that there is perversion—there is unaesthetic practice of sex-act—there is mixo-scopia zoophilia as well as zooerastia Does this also come in the sphere of the search of the divine ? It is obvious that the sexual morality of the period when these sculptures were made might be indulgent to free sex-behaviour or that the opinion on sex relationship was much more liberal

Besides monogamy there appears bigamy, polygamy , and besides the usual sex-act the perverted forms of sex-act like cunnilingus and fellatio were prevalent, there may have been also some scope of Sodomy, lesbianism and bestiality Should we consider that the period in question was a period of moral deprivity because there was Tantricism which advocated the theory of Bhoga and Yoga, because the people were much more inclined to pleasures We have learnt from *Prabodhachaandrodaya* that Jain and Buddhist monks and Chhapanakas had begun to enjoy the pleasures of wine and women and of comfortable living Earlier to this period the women were allowed to the Shramana fold of these two religions and that the Sangharamas were the centres of comfort and pleasure for those who run them There was a practice among men to visit prostitutes ,

besides this references are there to prove the existence of the temple prostitutes in the Devadasis and the noble prostitutes in the Nagar-vadhus whom only the elite class of the society could enjoy

Can we exonerate the social standards of sexual morality from the degeneration, perversion, and depravity that we witness in these sculptures ? Are they not the real pictures of the local moral standards of the period in which they were sculptured ?

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10

Opinions

Before any conclusion is drawn on the subject of erotic representation in the works of art with particular reference to the sculptures adorning the walls of Khajuraho temples, it would be worthwhile to make a survey of opinions of various writers and critics of Indian art These opinions may be classified into seven groups

1 Canonical aspect
2 Materialistic aspect
3 Philosophical aspect
4 Heretical aspect and legendary
5 Sex-education theory
6 Neutral aspect
7 Disapproval



1. Canonical Aspect

Most of the Shilpa-shastras mention nothing regarding the erotic representation on the walls of buildings But the few which mention are important works on architecture and sculpture In *Agni-*

purana it is mentioned that in the lower section of the door there should be placed two 'dvarpalas' and decorated in the rest of the sections should be figures of human couples [1]

The similar reference is also available in *Hayashirsha Pancharatna* In *Brihata Samhita* it is mentioned that, "The remaining part (of the door-jambs) should be decorated with auspicious birds, svastika, vessels, mithunas, leaves, creepers, etc "[2] In *Samarangana Sutradhara* it is mentioned that the *mithunas* of animals like monkeys and elephants should be placed in the decoration of buildings It also mentions the reasons for placing the *mithunas* of male and female on the body of temples [3] The *mithunas* were placed on the shrines "in order to meet the difficulty of getting a piece of land where couple lived and loved each other"[4] According to the *Mayamatam* and the *Shilparatnam*, "on the habitations of human beings should not be figured the scenes of wars, death or sorrow or legends about Gods and Asuras or nude figures and the Lila or amorous sports of the ascetics On other buildings, made for other purposes whatever is desired may be done"[5] These being "symbols of good fortune"[6] and "propitious, ward off evil and render the building immune to destruction"[7] The texts certainly do not prescribe their inclusion as a major part of the decoration and they propose a limited number of the *mithunas* to be included on the last band of the temple decorations [8]

2. Materialistic Aspect

Various art critics have praised the artistry and beauty of these sculptures Charles Fabri says that, " one never feels that this is pornography , the plastic values are so marvellous, the nobility of the sculptural work so great, that even the most sensuous scene is endowed with tremendous power of beauty "

" this is great art, it is passionate, it is fervent, it is burning with the fever of inspiration "[9] Irrespective of all the praise the kind of emotion exhibited in these sculptures if called upon 'to share' the 'rapture' and the 'ravishment in the beauty of love' there is much objectionable spirit infused in the art which cannot escape the frown of the society that we live in

" their anatomical presentations, their throbbing religious symbolisms, and their highly expressive and eloquent eroticism, have distinctive aesthetic qualities They are sculptural masterpieces of supremely high quality "[10] "There is no universal criterion of taste or delicacy for all things at all times "[11] "The carved bodies seem to have been formed by a wind blowing from some other universe, from an almost

devilish paradise, and their naturalness seems to have achieved by some forbidden magic. These figures are not naturalistic, but they are almost painfully attractive "[12]

N. S. Bose simply finds in them a sense of pulsating life [17] S K Mitra finds here "intimate forms of amorous dalliance and sexual enjoyments"[18]

3. Philosophical Aspect

The most common and widely accepted theory regarding the representation of the erotic sculpture on the religious shrines is of the philosophical aspect It is evident that Tantricism was widely prevalent in the post-Gupta period The five 'M' theory of this religion in which 'maithuna' or the sexual-congress is one of the rituals gives ample opportunity to ascribe all the erotic sculptures of the country to the influence of this religion on all the principal religions which had introduced Shakti worship for various reasons Another theory, most akin to the Tantric principles is that of the union between Purusha and Prakriti, or Jiva and Ishvara, or Atman and Parmatman

A view that " the same sinister ritual of Tantricism which degraded that monumental conception also prevailed at Khajuraho" is derived from the conception of attaining the state of bliss through the enjoyment of sex and thus experience the oneness with God advocated by the Tantric system of worship, where " human sexual pleasure is exalted as the Joy nearest to God in realisation, but everything in life becomes divine, every action becomes, when properly understood, the concrete expression of some universal law, the shining surface of the deeper connection, the image of a less or more intimate approach to the Supreme Bliss"[16]. The Tantras advocate the twin theory in which on one hand these is enjoyment and on the other these is liberation This enchanting aspect of Tantricism made it popular and forced the major religions to absorb less or more *tattvas* of the ritual of worship

"Had there been no Tantric teaching, the baroque artist would have still dwelt on the sensuous aspect of his figures, he would have still searched for striking, attractive themes and forms "[17] A difference of opinion may be put in here that even if the artist would have continued to create sensuous figures and forms he could not have dared to produce completely erotic subject unless and until the leaders of the religious and social institutions had permitted him to do so We know that in this period of religious domination it would have been impossible for the artist to create forms for the temple decoration without the approval of the religious heads of the time.

Alan Watts in his study of the sculptures of Konarak opines that, "Their love-making is a sort of ritual dance Our difficulty in understanding this is the feeling that the combination of worship and sex is like water and fire , so religion is blasphemed and lust is quenched by solemnity "[18] He further says that, "Religion without sex is a rattling skeleton, and sex without religion is a mass of flesh "[19] It may be noted from this opinion that sex in India has always been associated with religion because of the worship of Phallic God Shiva in the form of Lingam and Shakti worship of the Tantras , and also due to the science of love that was so much the part of the 64 arts that an Indian was supposed to learn

Miguel Serrano says that, "Shakti, the Mother, is the ultimate model of all the Statues, and that the statues at Khajuraho represent the union of the Self and the Ego "[20] *Mithuna* symbol represents the generation of the Universe[21], and "consecration of the flesh"[22] They "are pictorial interpretations of the formula 'bhoga is yoga' Their exuberant everpresence is a paean to transcendental Eros, translated into the language of human reference"[23]

In the foregoing opinions we find that the social aspect of the erotic representation has completely been overlooked Since society and religion combined have played a great part in the cultural history and life of Indian people, simply evaluating the propriety or value of a particular aspect may not do justice Ascribing the sex to the religion provides ample opportunities to connect this aspect with the philosophical aspect of union of man with the divine, as the following few opinions will prove

The "physical union between two people is a pantheistical act that leads to communion with the universal harmony , creatures joined in the ecstasy of the flesh experience for a moment a unity with that essential harmony" The opinion that, "eroticism is absent from the art of the great classical civilisations"[24] cannot be taken as true Proper erotic sculpture like that of Khajuraho may not be found in the art of other period, the sensuousness of form and expression had reached its perfection in the classical art of the great Gupta period "The romanticism of the Hindu writer and sculptor is distinguished by the fact that it is the transmutation of the known, The release of the drop of self (*atman*) into the shining ocean of the infinite, 'the becoming one' through the climax of the act of love, this is the metaphysical basis of Kama "[25] The true and intimate relationship between man and God has been visualised and realised in the experience of sex This experience has been considered as the 'quest of the Absolute'

The erotic is not ' indicative of moral depravity', and that, "the matter of sexual relationship in Indian civilisation, in every stratum of society, holds up a standard of morality as high as Europe has ever done", also that sexual relationship is "to express the true relationship between the human soul and God"[26] All the philosophical interpretations that there is a desire to become one with God through the act of love leads to a sort of illusion in the expression of 'to know' , but, as knowledge is Truth and Truth is God—thus 'to know' is to know the Truth or God

"Mithuna on the divine plane is an expression of ineffable joy Ranging down from gods and demi-god to human kind, the portrayal of love undergoes a change to marked realism " The opinion that "the erotic in our nature is a quest of the Absolute" sounds absurd Could there be no other means to find 'the Absolute' ? And that, " these images" should be considered, " as provocations for purity"[27]—they may be provocations for sin but not for purity Where only husband and wife are concerned, the sex-act is a means of begetting progeny, when publicly exhibited as examples of art it may be called obscene as art portrays such values of life which are of social origin and universal character Art shapes and regulates 'human relations and life goals' [28] Further that, "all true art has in fact to deal with questions of moral and social values, their degrees, inter-relations, and hierarchy in making a selection of the contents Such problems belong to ethics, sociology and philosophy"[29]. The contents of art lose their utility and purpose if they disregard the functions they are expected actually to perform They may in their philosophical aspect represent the "Union between Essence and Substance, Purusha and Prakriti"[30] But the purely human aspect of the sex-act cannot but be purely the play of passion and pleasure

It is hard to accept the aphorism that the easier way to get over one's temptation was to yield to it, that in erotic excess lay the secret of spiritual success [31] It may be suggested here that though certain values and norms of life undergo change in subsequent period of civilisation there remain some which have constant characters and eternal qualities, and these certainly do not change The constant exists in the spiritual unconsciousness of man It may appear to have undergone change due to overwhelming influences of the dominant contemporary values but sooner or later the ashes of these inconsistent matters are swept away by the tide of universal values that remain true and good in all times and for all men The medieval period was obsessed by the power and position of a few—like the kings and the priests—and

it is not impossible that the joint efforts of these two may have introduced certain values that the common man could not have dared to disapprove, because the religion approved them Today we see that though religion remains, the powerful hands that once dominated religion have been cut off

4. Heretical Aspect and Legendary

There is a notion that, " the erotic sculptures appear mainly on the outer shrines and not on the inner The idea emphasised is that the worshipper should be able to give free vent to his imagination outside the shrine and cast away all lascivious thoughts before entering[32] it "In this context it may be pointed out that the outer walls of the shrines which adorn the erotic themes have also besides them images of the principal deities of the Hindu pantheon that we find inside the shrines There are other major gods and goddesses that are either the *parivara devatas* or Lords of the directions The absence of erotic sculpture inside the sanctum only does not therefore suggest the idea expressed in the comment above It is a well-known fact that the worshipper or devotee seldom enters the sanctum which is not well-lighted and therefore the presence of images or sculptures other than that of the cult image would not have served any purpose The erotic sculptures are, however, located on the outer walls of the sanctum which is a part of the ambulatory passage

If the suggestion that, " the offensive figures are due to a desire to typify religious idea, and not to an inherent vicious taste"[33] is accepted the responsibility of evolving the symbolism must be placed on someone without prejudice and it is necessary to uphold some principles of art which may be good and ideal for the people inheriting the art treasures.

According to one opinion, "the mithuna carvings were a means of attracting the people to the temples a larger number of pilgrims helped to enrich the coffers of the state as well as those of the temples "[34] Indian people visited temples for no superfluous reasons It was customary that the offerings and sacrifices were placed before the deities It is, however, true that the temples acquired riches in cash and kind by way of donations and offerings and thus for sometime were means of earning state revenue Later the total earning used to remain under the direct possession of the temple authorities

A popular belief is that "the indecency was generally introduced" because "it was a protection against the evil eye"[35] Yet another

belief is that it protected "the buildings from storm and scare lightening away"[36]

It is also said that, " the sculptures portray the process of evolution From vegetation to animals and then to higher animals and the lower human beings indulging in vulgar activity , then we rise to more elegant mithuna scenes of cultured men and women Higher above, there are semi-divine and divine beings and lovers, until we reach the super-god"[37]. What the critic has suggested by evolution is probably the types of sex-act depicted with difference of shade and taste The evolution of species is nowhere to be seen

If " the devotee who has come to the temple is being tested"[38] against "the seemingly delight bestowing temptations" one should not forget that all those who approach god do not do so at the cost of their worldly life Some pray for happiness, some for children and some for wealth, a very few come to the temples as ascetics To what purpose the testing ? They are the worldly people and sex being an essential factor of their life they are not supposed to leave all the carnality they possess simply for visiting temples It is the man who shapes the gods and he expects from them blessings of various kinds

A peculiar kind of opinion is put forward according to which " there are countless females and a fever and frenzy of sexual activity on the walls of these temples, there are hardly any children there"[39] But children are very much there who are being fondled by the Nayikas There are, however, other Nayikas who have attained the glory of motherhood and this aspect has been symbolised by placing the Nayika under a mango tree laden with fruits, a bunch of fruits held in one hand and the well-known love-bird of India—parrot—sitting on the back of the palm of other hand In addition to the above opinion, it is also suggested that, " children were wanted, however, they came even as Hitler wanted them in the modern times, to augment his military forces, to replace the war decimated, to increase the population in any way , for, large numbers mean more soldiers, more workers"[40] It may be noted here that the armed forces of the Indian kings functioned independently During the period of confrontation with the army of the enemy the social life of the State was not at all affected The supply of men to the army was made mostly from the warrior class It is possible that the regular wars in which the small kings were always engaged used to reduce the strength of the army but there appears no reason for inducing people to manufacture children, with the help of erotic literature and art When required people from all classes and categories stood up to safeguard their interests as well as of the State

5. Sex Education Theory

Vatsyayana mentions in *Kama Sutra* that, Kama is to be learnt from the *Kama Sutra* and also from the worldly wise citizen [41] He advises that, "Man should study the *Kama Sutra* and its subsidiary arts alongside the arts and the sciences contained in Dharma and Artha Maiden should study the *Kama Sutra* and the subsidiary arts before marriage, and in the event of her marriage, should study the same with her husband's consent"[42] Many writers have believed that the erotic sculptures are representations of the sex-act described in *Kama Sutra,* and that their purpose is to educate people in the art of love In *Kama Sutra* it is said that one must 'beware of the dangers' because the pleasures of Kama can be achieved 'with the help of the five senses' and these senses are vulnerable to evils and therefore must be employed very judiciously particularly in sex-education Vatsyayana has named two sources from where to learn Kama and they are the *Kama Sutra* and 'the worldly-wise citizen' He has not advised the learning of Kama in the ways the other arts are learnt He, however, mentions that the learning of Kama must be 'according to the dictates of the mind in consonance with soul'

The erotic sculptures have been considered by some critics to be the illustrations of Kama as described in *Kama Sutra* It must be remembered that Vatsyayana himself is of opinion that Kama should be learnt in privacy He advises that, " a woman should study this text or part of it and also the practical application of its principles privately with the help of a person worthy of her confidence"[43] If it was desired to reproduce the postures and ways of Kama as described in *Kama Sutra* why this aspect of the advice was ignored and temples which were the places of social discourse and assembly were chosen to exhibit the most private act for the purpose of rendering mass education in this field to children, youth and old alike

It may be true that these 'plastic versions of the erotic injunctions' may be identical in spirit, of the *Kama Sutra,* but not in forms, in motive but not in function, and in description but not in detail

Another critic observes that, " the obscenities carved on temple-walls are, education in sex hygiene The joy of clean and healthy intercourse, " Even if the education theory is accepted the point why it was considered essential to depict erotic scenes in 'the most popular place of assembly' with the intention to 'benefit the largest number' of people has not been clearly stated

There is a point of removing the sexual curiosity by imparting "sexual education through images, of every possible form of sexual

enjoyment"[44] But in trying to educate the people to resolve the 'complexes' of sex and 'sexual curiosity so that there may not appear 'perversion of the mind' one must remember that even after education the mind may become pervert due to the desire to apply the knowledge of sex in practical life The danger of this open education which persons of all the age groups may receive have also to be kept in mind.

There are people who prescribe that there should be 'free play of the passion' between men and women They advise these men and women not to "forget that always there are the gods above, there is our aim of aims, man's supreme goal, *moksha*, salvation of the soul"[45] Yet men and women forget that and are confronted with the 'sins of the flesh' ! It is due to this that, " the learned pundits of the day found pseudo-religious and pseudo-philosophical justification for practices widely prevalent around them so prevalent that they considered it useless to fight these practices"[46] Curious enough is the remark, in this connection, that, "Prudery was quite unknown to Indian artists, who had no conception of 'the sins of the flesh' "[47] Does this mean that the artists were of a priviledged class in which sex was divine and without sin ?

6. Neutral Aspect

Eroticism being very much the spirit of these sculptures there could be no other spectacle which would be so daring "so varied and definite and compelling as to be beyond any comparson"[48] As it has a two-fold significance in it, first, "on the profane level" and second, "proportionate to the sacred",[49] one feels that, "the amorous adornment of temples is never 'obscene' Obscenity only comes with ugliness "[50] The sculptures portray "love sensuous and love sublime"[51] " one never feels that this is pornography" as "even the most sensuous scene is endowed with tremendous power of beauty"[52] R L Mitra finds in the 'nude' of the Orissa artists, perfect harmony and beauty and sees in it no 'offence to good taste' but the artists "have added there to certain licentious representation which do not admit of description"[53] These figures are "due to a desire to typify religious idea, and not to an inherent vicious taste in the artists or their employers"[54].

If the artists could not perceive the true character of their works they would be able to please only a few people Still it is said that, "There is no universal criterion of taste or delicacy for all things at all times that aesthetics strictly pledged to life-long celibacy and ardent reformers preaching high moral principles have never, in the

past, protested against what is now termed as "obscene representation"[55] But morality regarding sex has not undergone noticeable change for considerably long time Moreover, whatever sanctity was attached to sex in the past does not exist now and therefore the period in which these erotic representations were made is more near condemnation and criticism There may not be any 'universal criterion of taste or delicacy' but there has been a steady criterion with regards to sexual morality and its exhibition in public There were severe punishments laid down for the offenders

Since the woman has been considered a mother and not an object of enjoyment the religious, social, and legal forces have been applied to safeguard her respect In the period when she was let down from the respectable position of a mother there came decadence, conflicts, wars, and insanity In various religious treatises the punishments for those committing breach of law regarding sex have been mentioned *Apastamb* says that if a man has raped a maiden his property be confiscated, his private part may be severed [56] According to Yajnavalkya the offender should be punished in a way a thief is punished [57] *Naradasmriti* prescribes confiscation of property, exilement, branding the body, severing the private part and death penalty for sexual offence with the wife of another person [58] All this proves that the sexual morality was considered a matter of importance and in cases of offences severe punishments have been in vogue Comparatively the modern law is much more lenient

The morality of the medieval period may, however, have been lenient toward the representation of the sex-act on the temple walls because the authorities and the religious heads must have attached mystical meaning to it but the legend of Hemvati proves that 'the sin of the flesh' was punished even in this period To say, therefore, that what is now termed as obscene representation had not invited protest is incorrect and is in itself a sitting in judgement

Erotic reliefs of Khajuraho may not appear as vulgar "if one brings to the sculptures the warmth of the heart rather than the cold stare of obscene enquiry or the furtive gaze of a later, more cynical and weary age[59]" This point is unable to impress as the amatory couples certainly cannot symbolize the philosophy they are meant to represent "Their lovemaking is a sort of ritual dance"[60] Though "some of the figures have exceeded the 'common' codes of decency but most of them must not be looked down as saturnine contrivances They have a lesson to tell and correspond with the basic principles of *Kama-Sutra* and *Rasa-Shastra*". As "every aspect of human life—

every phase of our imagination portrayed entire history of a section of Indian people—their habits and manners—their joys and sorrows—their religion and culture "[61]

Another opinion tries to uphold the sculpture of mating as "a secret language, a kind of code in which messages of great worth and moment have been recorded, and to those who understand this secret language, much is revealed" [62] In the "abstraction of the love-sentiment" some find "the rhythm of composition of two smoothly interlocked bodies", the "melting into a single essence that transcends the character of the transient mood and gesture" and acclaim the success of the artist by saying that, "Almost never have human moods been so psychologically and reflectively rendered in sculpture , All indeed, celebrate the innocence of the flesh and the ecstacy of the soul at the same time" [63] All this is to make man, the viewer, wise in the science of flesh and experience the ecstacy of the sensuous joy in unimaginable hundreds of ways They send back man to the world with the notion that they have probably not explored the region of sex as the Sastras expect man to do If God is to be found through the practice of sex why not enjoy 'the nuances' of love and sex, till then the the gods could wait

Some find in them " vulgar notion of the philosophic concept", but do not see "any moral depravity"[64] in them Probably the moral depravity has no connection with interpretation of 'vulgar notion' and representation in sculpture of 'grossly obscene'[65] subject The above is an attempt to make one's criticism agreeable to the people For them the activity of their bodies "seem no more than an expression of a profound divine longing"[66] In these activities of men and women purely 'longing' is portrayed Dr Ray has, however, traced the 'creative sensuousness' of *mithuna* of Indian Art has source in the art of Sanchi, Amaravati, Mathura and Ellora and "it is not necessary, to explain the erotic scenes and scenes of sexual acts by referring them to Tantric practices"[67]

7. Disapproval

Lastly there are opinions which either outrightly disapprove the representation of the erotic subject on the temple walls, or who mildly reproach the artist and the authorities either of whom had originally conceived upon the theme The later category sees in them the mystical union or the Tantric rites, but often express indignation and amazement at these It is in the affluent society that the signs of decay begin to appear because the spiritual and physical values of life of the people

after reaching to a great height is pulled down to the level of condemnation and disgrace When the virtues of life, the conceptions of truth, and the welfares of the human beings are disregarded and forgotten in the glory of the achievements, state of dilemma and confusion is apt to come as happened to the people of the post-Gupta period The "period of decline in every culture exhibits an unhealthy interest in sexual behaviour, yet the description and portrayal of such behaviour is evident at many levels and periods, although the form and symbolism may vary "[69] We find that in the Chandella dominion the sexual morality of people of different faiths was at its lowest ebb and this is portrayed in the play *Prabodhachandrodaya*, and other historical records in which it has been mentioned that the centres of the principal faiths had become infested with sex-crazy monks and ascetics

Critics who vehemently express their disapproval, say that, "(Yet) much of the relief work depicts subjects which, are grossly obscene" representing "sister ritual[70] of maithuna"

Some describe the portrayal of sex act as the 'logical culmination' of 'the sensual element' , but they forget that the culmination of sensual element in life may be the sex-act but the sensual element in art is culminated into much more sensuous charm and beauty and to represent it in the symbols of sex-act would not be 'logical' and say that, "it has almost completely shattered the aesthetic barriers [71] " They think that the representation of sex in art has "forced the ultimate realisation that life is art What is justified and fundamental in life must also be justified and fundamental in art" [72] But they forget that not life but to live is art Art may represent the values of life—social, religious and moral, but it does not let the artist ignore them for cheap popularity The sense-arousing quality of certain acts and thoughts may find much more success if expressed through art—and their exhibition in public may not be in the common good The union of a man and a woman may be true in terms of life but if reproduced in visual arts may invite condemnation and severe opposition "Life is life because of its particular dynamic organisation"[73] it is so because of its "self adjusting, self-creating and self-producing" qualities "Like life, art owes its virtues to the fact of its organisation The work of art is matter, but matter organised in a very particular way, that raises it to a supermaterial level "[74]

Other critics, clearly blame the contemporary society for the picturisation of "these loose sculptures" and says that, "the period during which these were carved was one of declining morals and degenerate men It was degradation and degeneration of the worst order, for

it had the semblance of holiness about it and enjoyed the support of religion under which garb the priests were having a good time of it" [75]

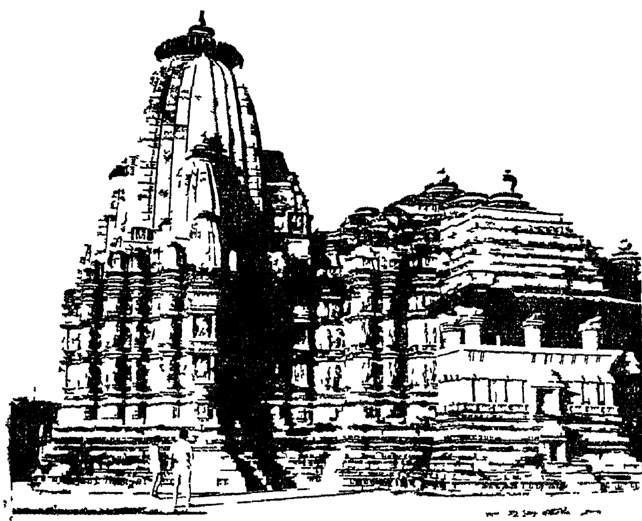
Failing to find an answer to the question of pornography or obscenity of these sculptures it may be asked that, "to what extent the presentations of the symbolical unity in the Duality—in forms in which the Two become One, can be permitted without offending against our sense of propriety and decorum " [76]

It may be asked if the presence of 'several dignified representations of the gestures of love' have helped in minimising the offence of exhibiting the obscene representations elsewhere ?

Some have attempted to exonerate and exclude the society of the time from being responsible for this art but have at the same time called it 'vulgar' interpretation and that it was a 'popular art'

Some hold Mattamayuras indirectly responsible for them [77] Some reject this opinion by saying that, the Mattamayuras had nothing to do with them [78]

Some have tried to trace the origin of the maithuna couples in the Yakshi figures The Yakshi and her male counterpart, the Yaksha were associated with fertility cults, but later assimilated into the orthodox religions of Hinduism and Buddhism [79]



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स्पर्शविशेष-विषयात्वस्याभिमानिकसुखानुविद्धा फलवत्यर्थप्रतीति प्राधान्यात्काम॰ ॥ १२ ॥
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Conclusion

A lot has been said on the nature of eroticism of the medieval period that manifested all institutions of human welfare Psycho-analysts, sociologists and art critics have discussed the question of eroticism in great detail and have expressed that it is the human mind only which is responsible for all kinds of erotic activities of man It is worth mentioning here that in ancient times the Indian seers had propagated that human suffering and happiness depended upon the state of mind and also that mind gave birth to desire while desire gave birth to action They made a two-fold enquiry of human life, viz, the physical and spiritual In the latter they laid stress on the working of the human mind The physical conception of matter helps to build personality and character of man and his behaviour and decides his actions Man acts in consonance to the experience and knowledge acquired by him through various sources, he acts in harmony with socio-economic conditions

From the point of spiritual order many aspects of psyche may be attributed to the development and building of personality of man These aspects may be grouped into two major states of mind, one conscious and the other unconscious According to Freud there are three such states " the conscious, the pre-conscious and the unconscious"[1]

The importance of unconscious cannot be denied One has to consider that the state of conscious may not prevail for long Moreover, time, circumstances, environment, etc, force the matters to sub side in the unconscious These matters of the unconscious mind along with those in the conscious help to build and keep a constant watch on the character of man Since the most dynamic and important emotion that plays a great part in framing human character is the emotion of sex Like all emotions sex too needs proper expression.

It is believed that, "opposite forces of love and hate, creativeness and destructiveness, which are juxtaposed together in the unconscious[2]," form the basis of the creative and destructive faculties of man But " the sex gradually becomes intertwined with all the highest and subtlest human emotions and activities, with the refinements of social intercourse, with high adventure in every sphere, with art with religion"[3]. In India sex has been sacramental for

married couples and there were strong restraints on sex-life. Initially the conception and construction of family itself restrained the freedom in sexual matters The moral ideals of individuals changed as taboos were imposed by society, but the oppression and restraint on sex gave birth to the conception of sin and guilt of flesh "In the euphoric or manic state, sex is seen as a sacred phenomenon which cannot be a cause of shame In the depressive state, there is deep sense of guilt, and sex is seen as vile and shameful"[4]

The states of conscious and unconscious minds can be explained in other way in which two different psychic developments occur and which has been termed as 'emotionalization' of sex, in which "the emotionalised inner world of man appears as a mind within a mind, another and quite distinct level of mental attainment"[5] Without this emotionalization "feelings of guilt tend to take on an all-pervasive and excessive character once they are repressed from conscious awareness , and how persons obsessed with conscious guilt seek to relieve it by compulsive actions or by self-punishment , and how they intolerantly seek to punish in others what they most fear in themselves"[6] All sex-needs and desires that are repressed make man an introvert, he may, however, express distaste and aversion towards sex but he remains always obsessed by sex to the limit of having concealed inclination for sex

From a study of the socio-economic religious conditions of the Chandella period we find that politically the country was in the state of complete anarchy

From whatever little record available of the social life of the Chandella kingdom we find that amidst the changing of arms the social life went on uninterruptedly The sculptured panels of Khajuraho depicting the social life of the people, have in them the urban as well as the rural folks, the civilians and the militia and intellectuals both householder and the saints They depict the frenzy of the sex-haunted men and women that sport in the heat of passion and excitement They know no limit, they acknowledge no restraint

This may, however, be claimed that the life shown here could not portray the life of the original people of the Chandella kingdom because there worked some hundreds of craftsmen from neighbouring as well as far off states in the country and the life portrayed by each craftsman must have cognizance to the life of the province to which he belonged This is one of the reasons for the similarity in patterns of architectural motifs and plastic forms and themes found in all parts of India Thus it cannot be claimed with certainty that in these are portrayed the

life of the people who lived and flourished in the Chandella kingdom before this transmigration of culture and religion began

Chandella kingdom had become a metropolis of cultures People of different faiths like Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Shaktism and Vaishnavism and from different states lived here is apparent

The god-fearing people of India respected and regarded the priests as the agents who could lead man to salvation The verdicts of the priests on religious and social problems were final and binding for all Help of the ruler was however sought for putting the seal of authority on all decisions The matters that involved large-scale expenditure and labour were referred to the royal authority The king supplemented the income of the royal treasury from the indirect and direct taxation One of the institutions of indirect taxation was the temple People offered sacrifices in terms of cash and kinds, some percents of which went to the royal treasury King was, therefore, interested in the erection of many temples for which he could employ labourers and skilled craftsmen and artists on nominal payment or even on no payment basis

We have seen as to how the religious philosophers of major religions, and the different sectarian doctrines cast their influence on the people In this period Tantric philosophy made a sweeping success, so much so that Buddhism, which had been divided earlier into Mahayana and Hinayana carved out from the body of Mahayana a new sect called Vajrayana No doubt Brahmanism too had suffered a good loss due to separatists like the Shaivas, the Vaishnavas and the Shaktas, and the further splitting up of the Shaktas into Tantrics But the process of disintegration affected all the other religions more and Brahmanism comparatively remained powerful

The Tantric thoughts, could not impress the intellectuals and the orthodox community who formed the back-bone of the socio-religious order of the society and therefore Brahmanism prevailed over all such fascinating diversions, foolish rivalry and the whims of ambitions intellectuals and seers who occasionally misguided the people Tantricism had no answer to the Brahmanical theory of desireless submission and dedication, love and devotion, worship and sacrifice , to the solemnity, pervasiveness and humanism that reigned in the Brahmanical thought , it also could not acquire the gravity, compassion and peace of Buddhism

Due to esoteric rituals and sex-orgies Tantricism was confined to forests and caves, this saved it from direct, confrontation, condemnation and fury of the people Thus it could not make much progress

for being away from the daily life of the people and by shunning the laws and orders of the day

The ways of the Shaktas could be tolerated but not of the Tantrics, as such the Buddhists and the Jainas who showed inclination towards Tantricism became the objects of condemnation and despisal An extremist dogma that was confined to the forests and suited its habitants and a few separatists civilians could not be tolerated by the kings and the votaries of Brahmanism , therefore this assumption that its doctrines succeeded in making the kings and the priests to allow the erection of numerous temples does not hold ground It could have been Brahmanism, the allegiance to which was widespread and undisputed, that could have motivated the heads of state and the masses to accept whatever was proposed in the name of religion No other religion could have been allowed to build such temples without earning overwhelming support of all sections

Thus we can say that only the votaries of Brahmanism could have perpetrated the origin of eroticism because due to the emergence of religions like Jainism and Buddhism the defensive policy adopted by it has been accommodative which outmoded new religions It had survived several threats from foreign elements, peoples and faiths that migrated to India We can safely say that Brahmanism only got these temples erected by accepting the challenge of the time and proposing such theory the spirit of which was very near and similar to Tantricism It is feasible firstly that the society may not have approved the inclusion of the erotic subjects in the body of the religious shrine but it also could not have rejected the idea outrightly The filigree of eroticism must have made the people completely flabergasted and they ate the prohibited fruit Secondly that the society might have lost the moral courage to challenge the decisions of religious authorities The religion with so much dynamism must have been Brahmanism Thirdly that individuals must have had no competence and intelligence in making a choice between good and bad Hence all the disputes of social and religious nature were to be resolved by the heads of the religious institutions the dictates of whom were obligatory

While tracing the history of plastic art in India we find that within a short period the Indian sculptor had perfected his art The styles of work of different periods indicate to the gradual refinement in expressions, and increased sensuousness in body forms, and compositional supremacy all of which were derived from nature The sculptures acquired the sensuosity of the living flesh, the vibrant life in

movement and sublimated emotional fervour symbolized in the physiognomy On one side there was sublimity of the other world and on the other there was the human warmth and idealism of this world reflected in the divinities and human beings respectively This onward journey of the plastic art towards high values and characteristics made it the 'beacon light to culture'

The content of human spirit in the Indian plastic art has been derived from nature and through the sensuousness of form and physique has been found the expression of the transcendent sublimity—of the Supreme authority of the God This vision of God is possible only when the nature of self is realised, when the truth about this futile world is known and when one is inclined towards the realisation of the Ultimate Reality.

This quest of knowledge and the innermost matter of things led man to symbolically express himself in words, sound and visual arts The sculptures, therefore, speak of the mind, ideals and beliefs of the people of a period, in them lives the past embodied, in them we find all human traits pertaining to all aspects of life Because man by trying to speak more and more eloquently, effectively and enduringly took to carving, painting, inventing letters and singing

While art represents and conveys the feelings ideals and truths of the people of one period to the people of the succeeding periods Indian art has in it a strange admixture of the mystical and physical values and standards of man The synthesis also between the spirit of man and the unknown Spirit is reflected well in it—this synthesis known as Yoga, the quest of truth, is expressed in Indian art and which sublimates the human impulses and is a means to attain the aim of Release It is probably the sublimation of sex-impulse Yoga of sex that is shown in Khajuraho, through which salvation has been sought, for it was believed that all acts if sublimated led to the Ultimate Truth

The spirit of Yoga is manifest in the life of Indian people All religious thoughts and religions that were born here were so near to the way of life of the people that the intricate and difficult theories of the life and soul, of God and the other world, of death and rebirth, etc , were understood by them as if they already knew all these things but had forgotten Even in the denial of God the Buddhism and Jainism aimed at salvation , the virtuousness preached by these religions was nothing but the different form of the laws of action and righteousness of Brahmanism , thereby the liberation from the rebirths and union with the Supreme Reality was matched by the prinri-

ples of Nirvana and Kaivalya

The ideal human qualities in the compassionate Buddha and Mahavira represent the transcendent and divine qualities that man conceived in superhuman character of perfection of these two great men is the result of the Yogic spirit, vision and realisation of one's own self , of realisation of the Truth Their emergence led Brahmanism to present the manifestations of God in human forms, thus the qualities of superman could be ascribed to them and in whom people could find a force to reckon, an ideal to imitate , and a saviour These identical ideals but difference in approaches had inspired the preachers of Buddhism to exploit the feelings of the simple god-fearing Indian people first by representing Buddha in visual symbols and later in the images that derived the physical beauty from the idealised forms of human body and Yogic Principles of meditation, e g , the introspection of the self

Brahmanism, however, entered later in the creative field but, surpassed the art activities that had so far helped Buddhism to spread its doctrines far and wide in this country Myths and legends were created and the manifestations of God were conceived so as to create glamorous polytheism in plastic art The quality of plastic art surpassed all the previous achievements This development by rivalry zealously continued until all activities ceased due to the domination of foreign power

The last phase of the plastic art of the country achieved the evening glory with a fascinating development due to the Tantric concept of Shakti worship which geared up mystic as well as creative activities and inspired the people to seek utmost pleasures in this world Eroticism appeared prominently in all walks of life In the sphere of art we find erotic creations in poetry, drama, painting and sculpture and the people were in chaotic dilemma All over India erotic sculptures were carved which aimed to depict through sex-act the union of self with the God, the realisation of self and the attainment of bliss, etc , it is not clear as to which particular religion inspired this movement There were three main sects that advocated the theory related to creation and union , these are those who worshipped Sun, Shiva and Shakti Tantricism cannot be taken as an independent religious sect but it can only be considered a form of worship adopted by those who believed in the doctrine of Bhoga and Yoga

We may here mention about the two types of dogmas that influence nearly all the people of the world These are the two states of society 'patrists' and 'matrists' [7] It is significant that in Europe the change

and written canons"[15], therefore whatever has been exhibited here must necessarily have been in demand even if not permitted by the scriptures and canons of art These are the themes of 'general necessities' only and were translated in symbols by the artist representing man's urges, social obligations and spiritual needs These are product of the combination of personal and impersonal characters of life. In these there is the expression of the self on one hand and on the other the "reconciliation of the discords of the world and the tensions of the self" A god too 'is a social agreement, a convention', therefore whatever is expressed in art forms must come through 'social agreement' and 'convention'

Man expresses is mind in art forms, all these art forms influence the people of the future therefore all art forms must be set on ideals of human welfare and aim at the development of right mind people and society The mithuna symbol was used by Brahmanism to counter the influence of Tantricism which brought decadence in moral and ideals of the people by the erotic philosophy of Tantricism

The emotion of love is realised more than is expressed, concerns the inner-self more than the outer Love is syronymous to Kama and must not be expressed in the manner of any other emotion The Act of Love has always been looked on in India as the accomplishment of physical destiny, the highest form of bodily activity, that by which man burns himself up in the gift he makes of himself It is the languish of the spiritual union by which the man on mental plane dissloves himself in joy[16] Expression of erotic impulse of man may be explained in terms of his aesthetical expressions and activities It is obvious that, " the story of how man has handled his sexual drives is also the story of how he has handled his creative impulse His attitudes to these imperatives colour his whole scheme for society, his politics, his art and his religion"[17] " art is intended for mankind which has its laws too"[18] "Art is thus a human activity with an aim and purpose the improvement of the human species Basically therefore art is a moral activity of the social man"[19]

Man's expressions have a wide influence hence he must not go beyond the limit of social allowances and religious thoughts and beliefs Harmony between individuals and society and individuals and religion must exist for enduring society and religion

Only such expressions should be made public which have conformity to contemporary social ideals Sex degenerates man and his sex-instincts have destroyed many civilizations The expression of sex-instinct has been termed as obscene We may define obscene

expression by abnormal expression that which is not in harmony with social norms and ideals Obscenity has been defined as "a permanent element of human social life" which "corresponds to a deep need of the human mind, or, for all we know to the contrary, of mind generally" "By the 'obscene' we may properly mean what is off the scene and not openly shown on the stage of life "[20]

There are two kinds of obscenity general obscenity and particular obscenity General obscenity is the result of ignorance, curiosity and negligence on the part of fun loving individuals whereas particular obscenity is the result of calculated, intentional and indulgent efforts and is practised irrespective of social or individual disapproval and checks We find mention of two other kinds of obscenity , "there is the naturalistic aspect of sexual processes, and there is the naturalistic aspect of excremental processes Both are, from our normally conventional stand point, obscene[21] " Obscenity refers to such form of expression which is generally considered as far from convention The synonyms of obscene are asunder or ugly , asubha or inauspicious , asuchi or unclean , and kutsita or indescent There remains an inevitable relationship between good and bad, thoughts and expressions, in obscence of the conception of bad there cannot be any conception of good There has to be a difference, however, between the patterns of behaviour of individuals due to the difference in taste, habit and temperament , and when the patterns of behaviour differ expressions differ too Therefore expressions can be good as well as bad

Obscenity is an unavoidable and essential aspect of sex Whatever makes sex unacceptable either for individual or society is termed as obscene An unusual exhibition of man's private functions may be called obscene because it is either in the expression of a particular emotion or in an action that obscenity may be discovered As such it is for the viewer to discover obscenity which " usually meant two things On one side it certainly meant nakedness, it was the unclothing of something that in public is habitually clothed But it also meant something sexually provocative That was evidently essential For unless this unclothing induced sexual activity how could it be 'immoral' , why should it be prohibited However, "Nothing is in itself obscene apart from the human observer" [22] Change in the ideals, standard and values of life bring change in the meaning of obscenity Often obscenity has been associated with sex as it arouses sexual desire, also that it has been defined differently "by a particular social class at a particular period of history" [23]

Meaning of obscene changed with time The degree of obscenity depended upon the measure of some relative qualities The expression of erotic emotions is obscene if not expressed dexteriously and it is not obscene if expressed ingeniously, when the expression is obscene there must be something wrong with the expression This is, however, true that, "Morality is based on our human nature,"[24] it is also significant that, "If the observer is watching with interest identification occurs , he takes the role of the observed person , he becomes the other And since consciousness has a muscular aspect a similar behaviour is initiated in the observer too "[25]

The behaviourical ideals of the observer and the observed become identical and also that the conscience of the observer does not come to his help if the above identification is harmful to his personality, his conduct or his image in the society ; and his consciousness fails to save him from this fall

This identification is, however, based on power of perception, intensity of feeling and reciprocity But in general the identification is certain, as there happens to be an awareness of self of social standards of tastes and aesthetic ideals Identification "springs from awareness"[26] When a person becomes aware of his emotions and as emotions require proper expression he in expressing his emotions identifies himself as " the expression of emotion is not addressed to any particular audience It is addressed primarily to the speaker himself, and secondarily to any one who can understand It what he (the speaker) wishes to do is to express his emotions intelligibly, he has to express them in such a way as to be intelligible to himself"[27]

The above opinions clearly point out to the fact that the expressions of a person must have such qualities as may be acceptable to other persons This quality of expression may be said to be an outcome of clear understanding of one's own self—one's own expression There is also another aspect of the matter according to which conception of a thing is important as it is the root cause of knowledge of something We express what we conceive Conception occurs due to thinking and knowledge The qualities of good and bad conceptions may be due to the right or wrong types of approaches and thinkings , ideas and dogmas , and local and outside factors that may be witnessed in the society of a particular period It is possible that a number of such factors may be at work in the society resulting in contrasting as well as different expressions In art and literature and also in general behaviourical patterns of the people of

a period we may find considerable difference in the types of expression, these may represent the social and moral standards of these people Particularly in the works of visual arts such expressions suggest that the people who created these works must have possessed a different view from other people, they must have considered themselves belonging to a distinct class which had the right to guide the rest of the community

In the plastic art of Khajuraho we find the erotic expression dominating all other expressions and if we apply the theory of identification for the purpose of assessing the moral value of such expression, we may deduce that the society must have had in it the tolerance to eroticism Either the artists or the community of priests or even the kings who had conceived the idea of making the people wise either in the art of sex-act or in realising the Truth by way of experiencing the highest form of pleasure, *anand*, compared to bliss were themselves the votaries of sexual pleasure It may be said, therefore, that there occurred an identification between the class which conceived sexual pursuit as not immoral with the class which always sought guidance from the above class For both of these classes the sexual pursuit in the form of worship or *sadhana* might not have appeared as obscene or pornographic Because "As soon as we form a clear and distinct idea of a passion, it ceases to be a passion" [28]

But this complete identification of the elite and the common man of one period in history may not occur in the other period between another set of people Therefore, the expression of one period might appear in another as unwanted, superfluous and even obscene On the basis of this it can be said that whatever we express today will not be acceptable to the people tomorrow, and, thus all our expressions must bear the mark of universality that may be acceptable to the people of all the subsequent periods including our own This is what happened, in my opinion, with the erotic sculpture of Khajuraho, in which we find a definite proposition of a certain high aimed philosophy And philosophy is concerned with the principles through which we humans seek identification with the Superhuman or God—through which cessation from the bondages of Karma, of birth, death and rebirth is sought—through which the achievement of bliss and release is attempted

It is, however, different that we, the people of this modern age, do not have the courage to accept the ideals and thoughts proposed through the erotic philosophy of the people of the period when these sculptures were made The ideals have changed with the time, the

social norms of living have been revised considerably Whatever these sculptures meant to convey to us has been lost due to the fast changing social patterns of our times "Public opinion, and sometimes reason, are the only arbiters of right It may well happen that, in a new age, men will be more generous and less exacting, once again recognizing inherent rights in spontaneous activities , but that age is not ours "[29]

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APPENDIX

This monograph was submitted as my thesis for the Degree of Ph D in the year 1973 A few books whose reference could not be made earlier and a few which were published later have been studied I am happy that the authors of these works have similar views on many aspects as were mine My work would still provide new approach, interpretation and analysis of the sculpture of Khajuraho

My contentions and opinions on various aspects may differ from some of the authors of the so far published works thus keeping the scope of further research wide open

Various remarks from the works which could not be included earlier and which either support or extend my views are given here The reader may compare and find the contrast in the content

Erotic expression does not commence with the architectonic manifestations of Khajuraho or end with them "They are sprawled out both horizontally in space and vertically along with corridors of time " Had there not been any leaning towards a particular religion and had there been no commissioning of the temples that include erotic theme, the artist would have created the erotic theme as the art of sculpture was fast growing embarassingly sensuous The religions of the time, particularly Tantricism favoured occult practices which included *maithuna* and the Kaula-Kapalika cults which were known to have excelled in such practices The priests preached eroticism for obvious reasons A ready support was found from the rulers The common man, afraid of the priests and the rulers had no alternative but to succumb either under the threat or to the temptation itself It was in such a politico-socio-religious milieu that these sculptures were created

Urmila Agarwal has opined that, "Any attempt to explain away these carvings with only one factor in mind is bound to leave a lacuna in the approach to an interpretation, nothing in the course of history happens abruptly or suddenly Every happening howsoever insignificant is conditioned partly by its background the beginnings of which may lie in earlier centuries, and partly by the contemporary environment They would no longer come as a surprise if one studies them against their social, religious, literary and aesthetic background "[1] This view corresponds to my study in which all possible angles of life of the period are under review

Vidya Prakash opines that, "The artist was bound to carve them His age demanded it , his society approved of it , his religion sanctioned it , he was equipped for it by his age-old artistic tradition, and he was inspired by the writings of *Kama-Shastra* "[2] In my work, I have traced the presence of sensuousness in earliest sculpture

The sensuousness increased along with the matuiity of style and depiction of varied subjects With the culmination of skill and thought the literary and artistic expressions achieved the eroticism despite all socio-religious milieu that once disapproved such depictions and exhibition According to Vidya Prakash, the erotic sculptures " could not have been forced on an unwilling onlooker They must have been required They must have satisfied" [3] The society and religion both restrain the human expression but both provide access to the factors that are responsible for the moral decadance Richard Lannoy points out that, "At its very pinnacle, the sacred moments opens upon the abyss of violence oi sexual paroxysm We are then seized by two simultaneous emotions a terror which would have no flee and a fascination which would consume us in the fire Religion both imposes the tabu that maintains order as well as inspires its contrary —transgression Tabu forbids transgression but fascination breaks[4] it " Analysing the existence of extensive erotic format in the life of Indian people of the medieval age he deduces that, "Maithunas were cultural property common to all Indian people, and an expression of an existential reality "[5] He finds in the erotic Indian sculptures a "paradisal innocence" and "the absence of any pornographic intention"[6]

Most significant remark of Lannoy is that, "—Khajuraho was influenced by the Tantric doctrine, but the temples are not necessarily Tantric "[7] This observation would lead to the study of Tantric sectarian influence on the life of the people of the time and help to focus the reasons for the extensive and remarkable expression of the erotic in art and literature There is still much left to discover the reasons for the great tolerance shown to erotic trend by the contemporary society

Devanagana Desai holds the protohistoric and histoiic trend of fertility cult responsible for "the depiction of *mithunas* in religious art"[8] She finds " that the Maithuna is depicted for the first time (500–900 A D) on religious monuments bearing the narrative reliefs of the Mathura pillars of the Kusana period"[9] She further opines that, "The reticent expression of sex in the previous period bursts into an ostentatious display in the period following A D 900 " She, however, believes that, "It was mainly the royal class and feudal chiefs who

commissioned the temples and their tastes and outlook were reflected in temple art."[10] The truth of this opinion cannot be fully agreed upon as the temple authorities exercised considerable influence on the royal class and feudal chiefs in the matters of socio-religious importance. She, however, believes that, "The presence of erotic motifs was not necessarily connected with the sectarian affiliation of the temples."[10] But her remark that, "This shift from religious to erotic themes would perhaps suggest an increase in sensuality in the period" cannot be fully agreed upon. We can see a gradual increase in the sensuality in the plastic art of the country irrespective of the social norms of different ages. It may, however, be said that there was increased tolerance to such erotic expression in visual form. She has found, "dues to suggest Tantric influence at Khajuraho",[11] but she also says that, "there is no inscriptional evidence on the patronage of Tantric Sects by the Chandella rulers"[12]

She makes a pointed conclusion that, "There is no philosophical or rational motivation behind"[13] the sexual representation, yet, according to her it was "in harmony with the religious environment"[14] to which it belonged.

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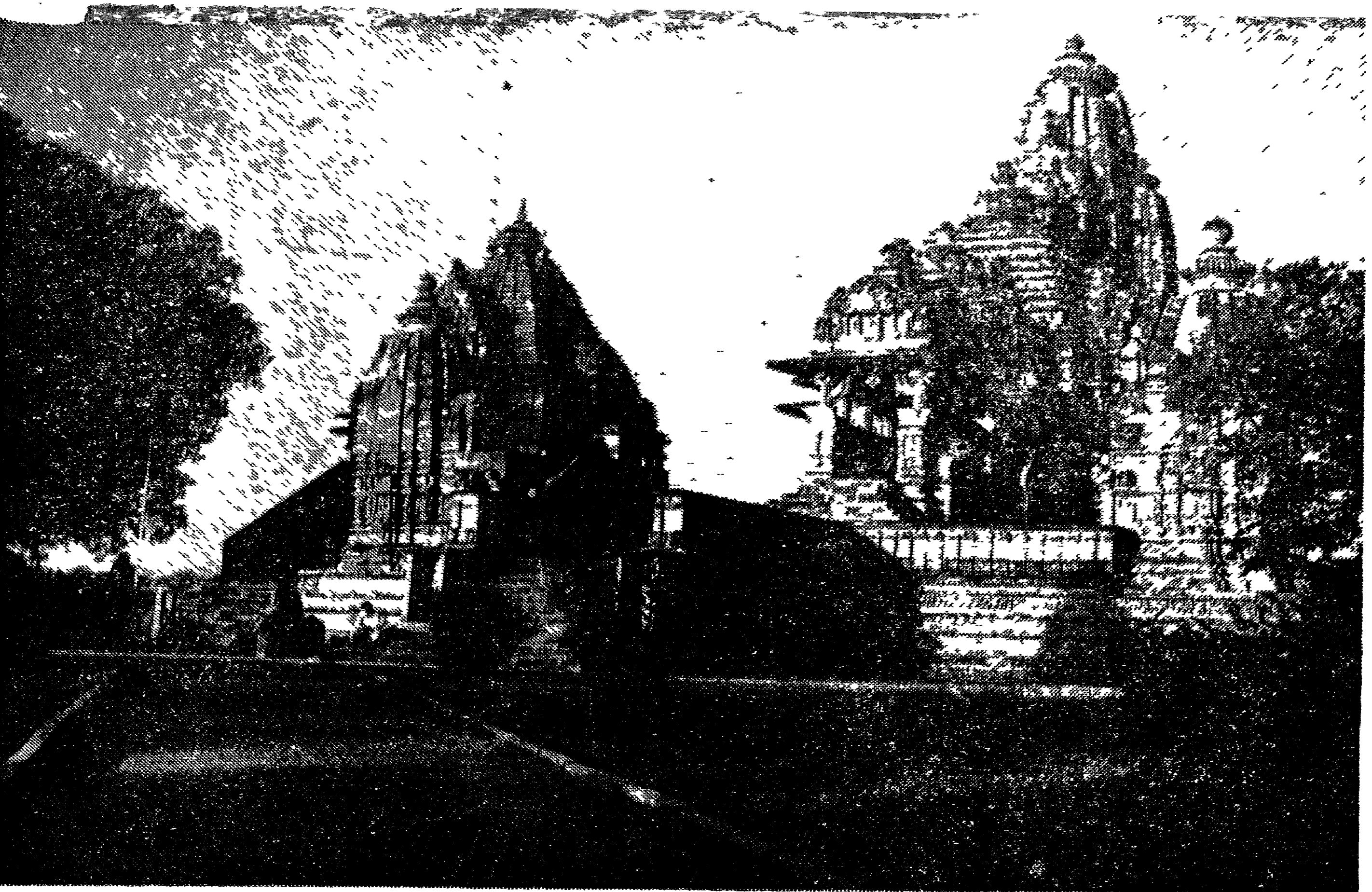
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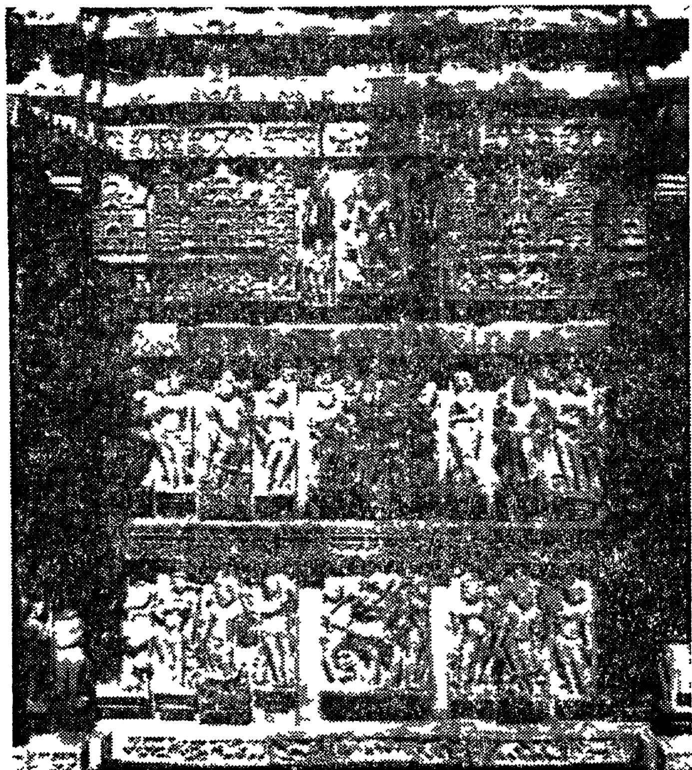
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Matangeshwar and Lakshmana Temple



Divine Amours



Amorous Assembly



Soaring pinnacle of the Kandariya Mahadev Temple



Erotic Mithuna

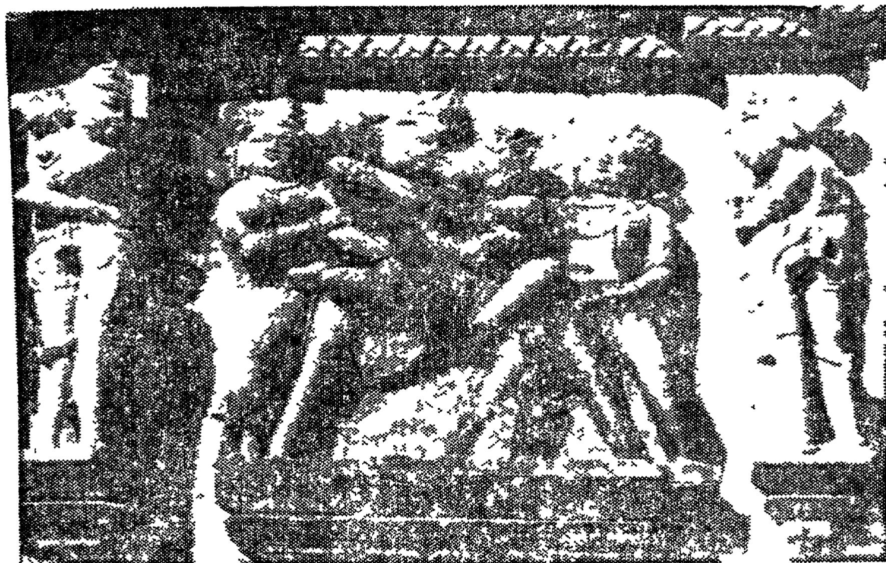






Divine Amours

Balconies of Kandariya Temple



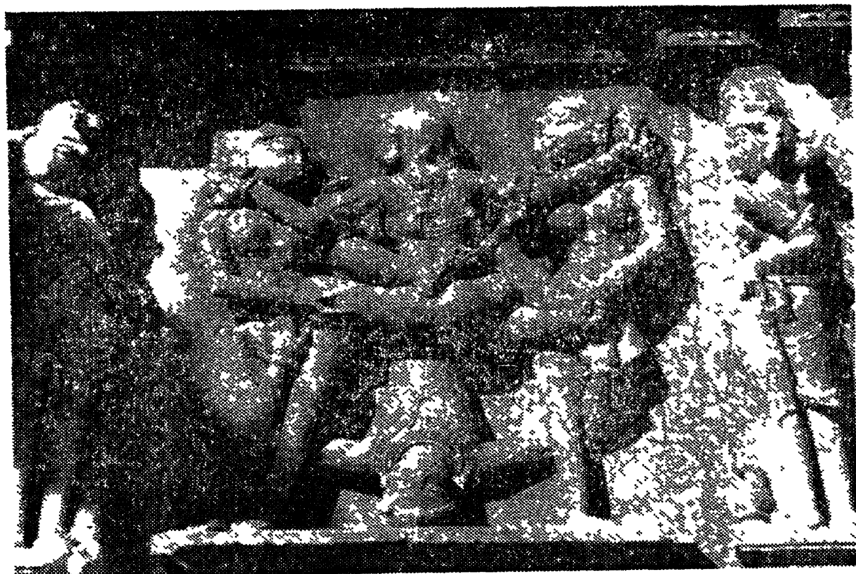
Amorous Assembly



Nayıka



Nayıka



Amorous Assembly



Erotomaniacs

